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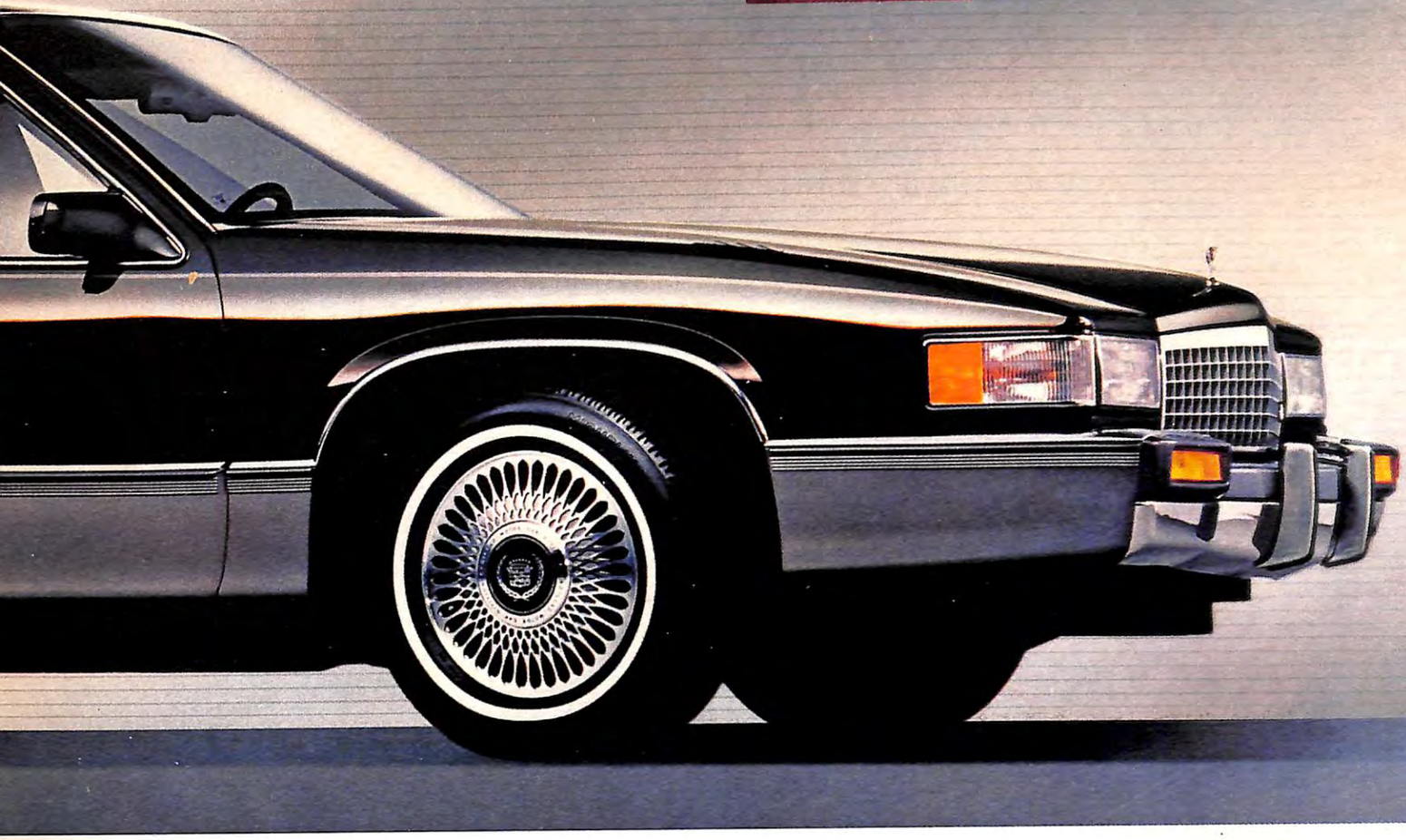

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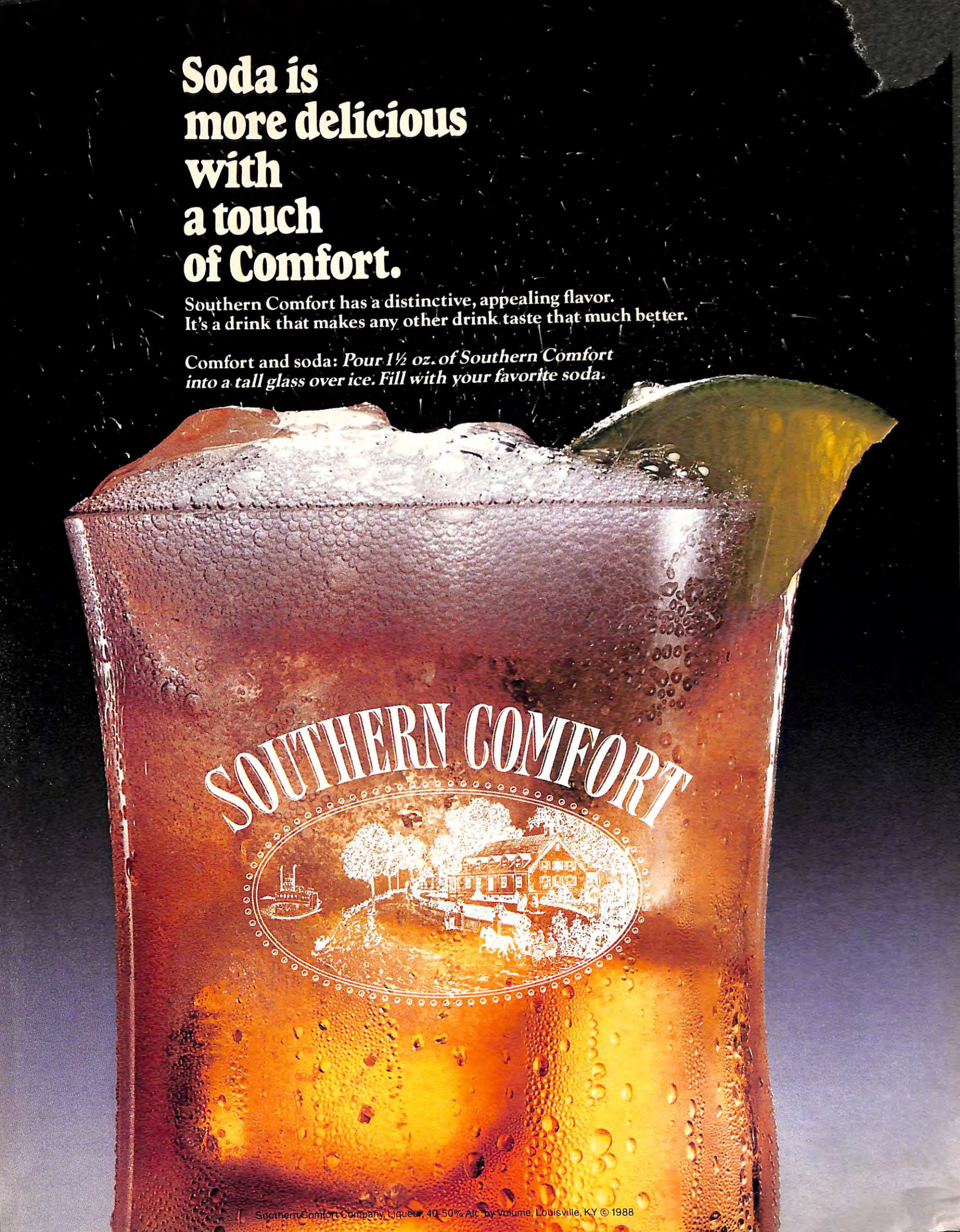
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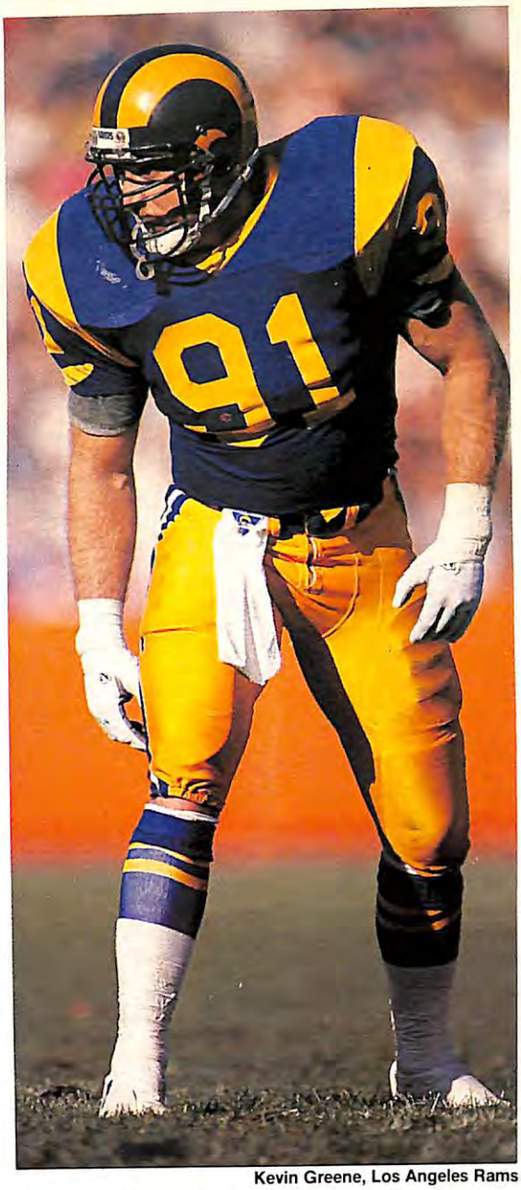

Kevin Greene, Los Angeles Rams

Team analyses and rosters for this publication were prepared before the opening of training camp and may not reflect late changes in personnel.

Dear Reader:
We hope you enjoy our 1990 edition of **Don Heinrich's Pro Preview**. We utilize some of the most knowledgeable writers, scouts and coaches in the business. While I may not agree with all the opinions expressed, I am pleased to provide a forum for their ideas and analyses.

Don Heinrich
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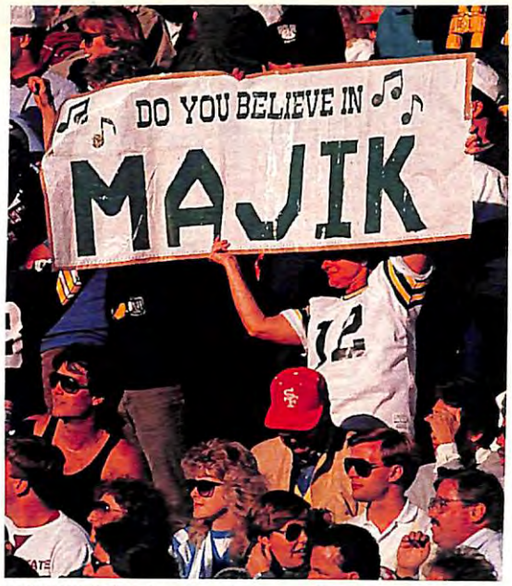
1990



EARTHQUAKE: Christian Okoye and the Chiefs are ready to send tremors through the AFC West. SUNNY DAYS: Packers fans await quarterback Don Majkowski's encore. TITLE WAVE: New York and Philadelphia put the NFC East on the line.

Seasonal Changes and Football's Global Warming

While game times get shorter, and the season gets longer, football American style continues to spread around the world. It's all just a matter of time.

The instant replay is in for another season, this time accompanied by a two-minute limit on decisions. Halftimes will be shorter (from 15 to 12 minutes), and referees will start the clock sooner following kickoffs, declined penalties and when ballcarriers go out of bounds.

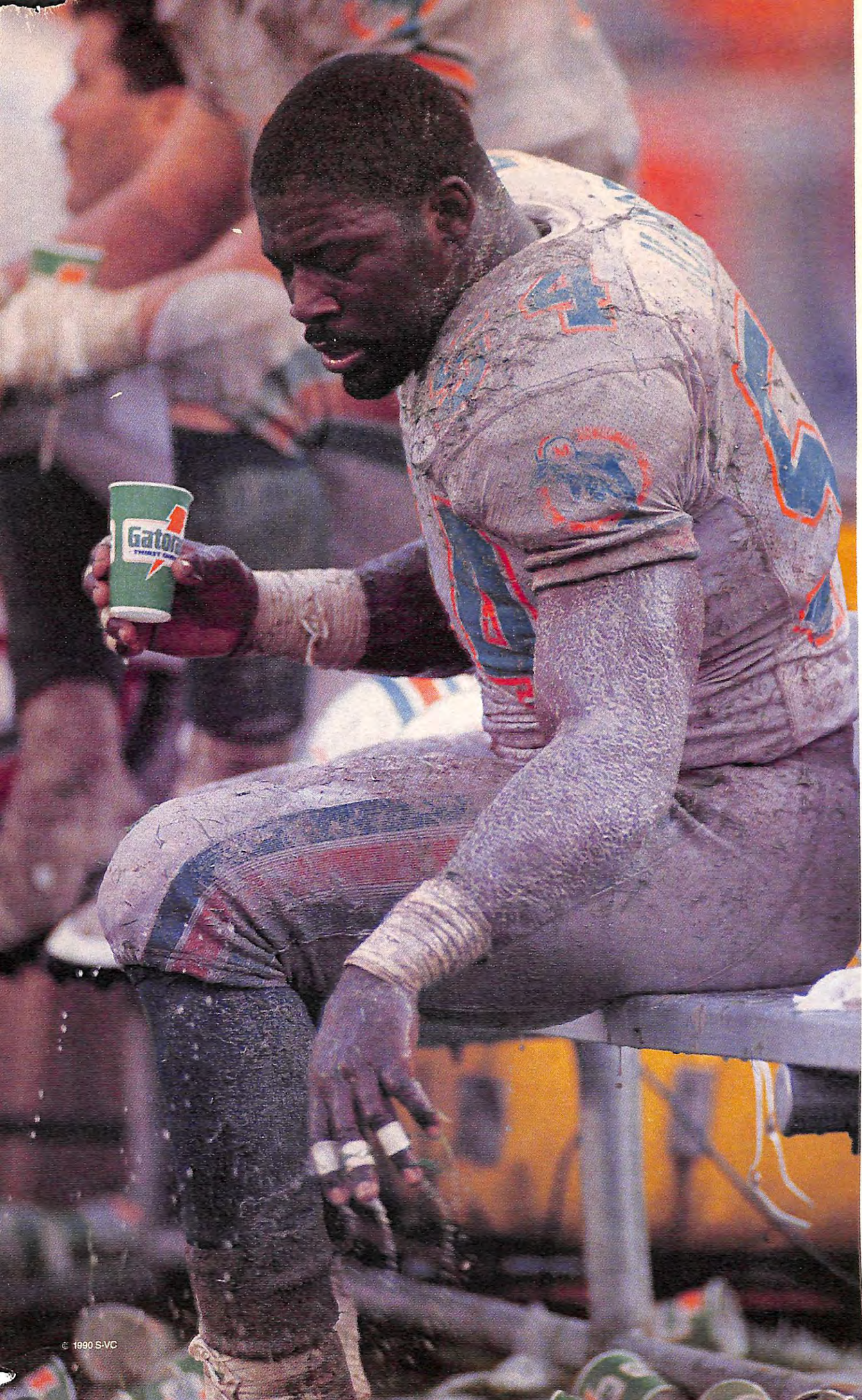
Instead of revenue sharing, players will receive more time off in 1990. Each team will now have a "bye," thus turning NFL campaigns into 16-game, 17-week (ir)regular seasons. Instead of two wild card teams per conference, there will now be three, increasing total playoff teams from 10 to 12. And with championship games moved back a week (Jan. 20; Super Bowl, Jan. 27) gone are those fun-filled two weeks of pre-Super Bowl media hype, when fans were treated to stories on Joe Montana's secret drug problems and Jim McMahon's opinions of New Orleans women. All alleged, naturally.

One story that keeps growing is pro football's popularity abroad. This year, NFL preseason games will be played in Berlin, London and Tokyo. The International Sports Connection (ISC), a football ambassador of sorts, represents both the European Football League and the Russian Federation. That's right, the Moscow Bears, one of 24 Olympic-level Russian teams being developed with the help of American coaches, are set to play exhibition games in the United States this summer. The European Football League involves 14 countries and more than 1,000 teams. Although the leagues vary in structure — most allow a maximum of five Americans on a roster, three on the field — they play by NCAA rules at a level comparable to Division II.

"The growth is just incredible. If we took the same team over there that we took 12 years ago, they'd be astonished at the expertise level," said Deborah Lile-Dunston, president of ISC. "Football has no cultural boundaries. It's definitely building and especially with the WLAF, it will just skyrocket."

Launch date for the World League of American Football (WLAF) is March 23, 1991. It will consist of three divisions: European (London, Frankfurt, Milan and Barcelona); U.S. East (Montreal, New York, Orlando and Birmingham); and U.S. West (Mexico City, Nashville, San Antonio and either Sacramento or San Jose). Its 10-game season culminates with two weekends of playoffs (division winners plus one wild card team) followed by a June 9th championship. Electronic communication between coach and quarterback and no-huddle games are aimed at getting in more plays in less time (under three hours).

"The World League is the first step of globalization of American football, " said Tex Schramm, former Dallas Cowboys owner and now WLAF president. "Eventually, I see a league in the Pacific Rim (Japan, Korea, Taiwan, China, Australia, Hawaii) and a playoff between the Pacific



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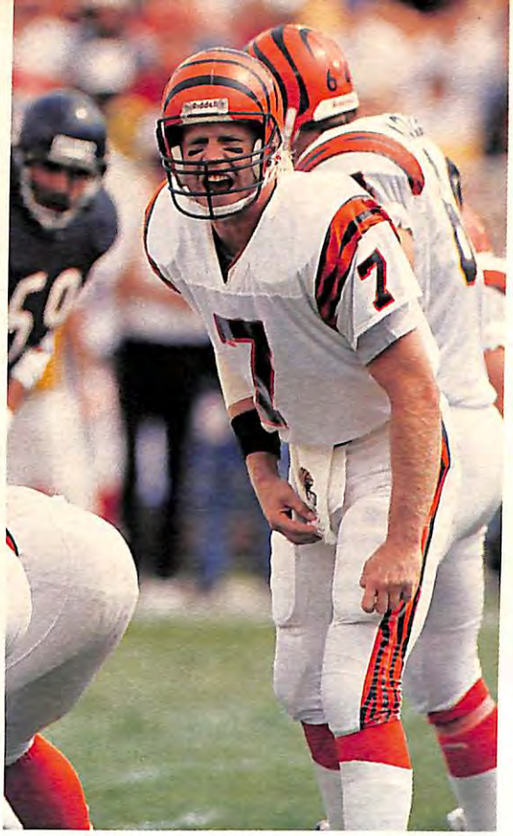

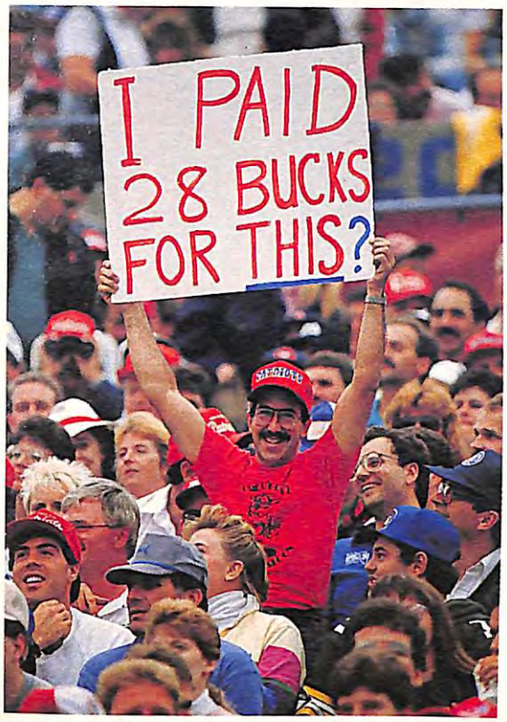

ON THE BUBBLE: By George (Jeff), it's a big year for Colts coach Ron Meyer. BOOM-TOWN: An MVP year for Boomer Esiason could make the Bengals Super. LETTER-PERFECT: A San Francisco Super Bowl six-pack. NEW ENGLAND, OLD STORY: Why is this man smiling? ROOKIE BE-WARE: Run-and-shootist Andre Ware gets set to deliver for Detroit.

Rim and the present World League."

So, with the world watching, here's a peek at the NFL's 1990 edition.

Teams on the Rise — Fast-finishing Washington has the strong passer and top receivers to go places — if the Hogs can hold on. Despite precarious depth, the Dolphins have a playoff-worthy defense. Atlanta's improvement will be buried beneath a brutal schedule. With NFC eyes on Don Majkowski and Green Bay, Detroit's rip-roaring run-and-shoot could steal the show.

If We Had a Quarterback — Kansas City, San Diego and the LA Raiders comprise the AFC West That Could Have Been. Steve Pelluer, Billy Joe Tolliver and Steve Beuerlein figure to take snaps behind lineups that overshadow their quarterbacking skills. Don't expect any sympathy from the Bears (Jim Harbaugh) or Patriots (Marc Wilson).

Going Down? — In three years, Indianapolis has cashed in eight No. 1 draft picks (top picks/starters Chris Hinton and Andre Rison, No. 1's in '87, '88, '90, '91 and two in '89) for Eric Dickerson, Fredd Young and Jeff George. One wants to retire, one left his Pro Bowl talent behind and the other has never taken an NFL snap. Hello? Mediocre drafts and aging talent — now there's a formula! — have Seattle on the ropes.

Coaches on the Bubble — Seattle's Chuck Knox and the Colts' Ron Meyer are handy scapegoats for management mis-firings (see above). Jerry Burns has Minnesota all dressed up in Super Bowl talent, with no place to go. Tampa Bay's Ray Perkins is one gamble (Keith McCants) from the noose. Philly's Buddy Ryan on the bubble? Naturally. He's never more than a bombastic comment from the unemployment line.

STRENGTH OF 1990 NFL SCHEDULE

		OPPONENTS' 1989 RECORD	PCT.
1.	Atlanta	138-117-1	.541
2.	Minnesota	136-119-1	.533
3.	Cleveland	135-120-1	.529
4.	Dallas	133-123	.519
5.	Houston	131-122-3	.517
5.	LA Rams	132-123-1	.517
7.	LA Raiders	131-123-2	.515
7.	Pittsburgh	131-123-2	.515
9.	Green Bay	131-124-1	.513
10.	Detroit	130-125-1	.509
11.	Cincinnati	129-125-2	.507
11.	Seattle	129-125-2	.507
13.	New Orleans	129-126-1	.505
13.	San Francisco	129-126-1	.505
15.	Kansas City	128-127-1	.501
15.	New England	128-127-1	.501
17.	Chicago	127-128-1	.498
17.	Denver	126-127-3	.498
19.	Indianapolis	126-129-1	.494
20.	NY Giants	126-130	.492
20.	Phoenix	126-130	.492
22.	Buffalo	125-130-1	.490
23.	Washington	124-132	.484
24.	Miami	123-132-1	.482
25.	Philadelphia	120-136	.468
26.	San Diego	117-136-3	.462
27.	Tampa Bay	115-141	.449
28.	NY Jets	113-142-1	.443

Rookies of the Year — Looking for this year's Dave Meggett or Eric Metcalf or even Barry Sanders? Check out Atlanta. Talented dynamo Steve Broussard just might bring out the Pro Bowl qualities of an underachieving offensive line. Don't expect Detroit quarterback Andre Ware to be carrying a clipboard for long. He'll have his rookie interceptions, but with his talent should take more than give.

MVPs — Joe Montana, San Francisco; Boomer Esiason, Cincinnati. The AFC's top gun the past two seasons, Boomer doesn't need a run-and-shoot to post big numbers. Montana's Hall of Fame arm and intangibles are lethal weapons.

Coach of the Year — Don Shula, Miami; George Seifert, San Francisco. With hats off to Pittsburgh's Chuck Noll, 1990 is Shula's turn to coax average talent to new heights. Detroit's Wayne Fontes is right there, but it'll be tough to ignore another sterling effort from Seifert.

Super Bowl XXV — (NFC) San Francisco, Minnesota, New York division winners; Philadelphia, Washington, Los Angeles wild cards. (AFC) Cincinnati, Kansas City, Miami division winners; Houston, Pittsburgh, Denver wild cards. In a thriller, the 49ers pull off the three-peat, 31-30, over Cincinnati.

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IT'S NO PASSING FANCY THAT BRAINS, NOT BRAWN, WILL WIELD PRO FOOTBALL'S POWER IN THE '90s.

MIND OVER MATTER

By Robert Oates Jr.

"The central event of the 20th century is the overthrow of matter. Everywhere the powers of mind are ascendant over the brute force of things."

—George Gilder

Sometimes it takes the notions of a socio-economic theorist to shed light on the future of professional football.

Sure, George Gilder is talking physics. He's speaking of a developing area of science where modern physicists have found that solid matter has disappeared, where subatomic "particles" are now understood as immaterial waves moving through immaterial fields.

In still another way, Gilder is talking economics. That which asserts that physical control of solid matter — land and its natural resources — is no longer crucial in an Information Age. A tiny island nation, nearly devoid of natural wealth, has become a world power based, in large part, on sheer intelligence.

But Gilder might as well be talking football philosophy. On the gridiron of the '90s, the sweating, grunting collisions of solid bodies are no longer of primary concern. A cerebral, high-tech scheme can bypass apparent physical limits on performance. Montana to Rice is the overthrow of matter.

The San Francisco 49ers indeed have demonstrated this new reality. The 1990 NFL season will be the first played with certain knowledge that an offense can dance effortlessly through the finest defenses — play after play, drive after drive, game after game. It's a phenomenon undreamt but in the nightmares of Vince Lombardi. It's track-meet football, basketball on the gridiron, a transmogrified contest that transcends trench warfare with thought and skill.

Football has always been down in the dirt, root hog or die, every yard paid for with punishment and pain. But in its playoff procession last January, the 49ers offense seemed to mock the machismo of its sport. Nothing looked hard. Everything looked easy. The 'Niners threw short, they threw long, they ran outside, they ran inside — and they did it all with a creative grace that spoke less of brute force than ballet.

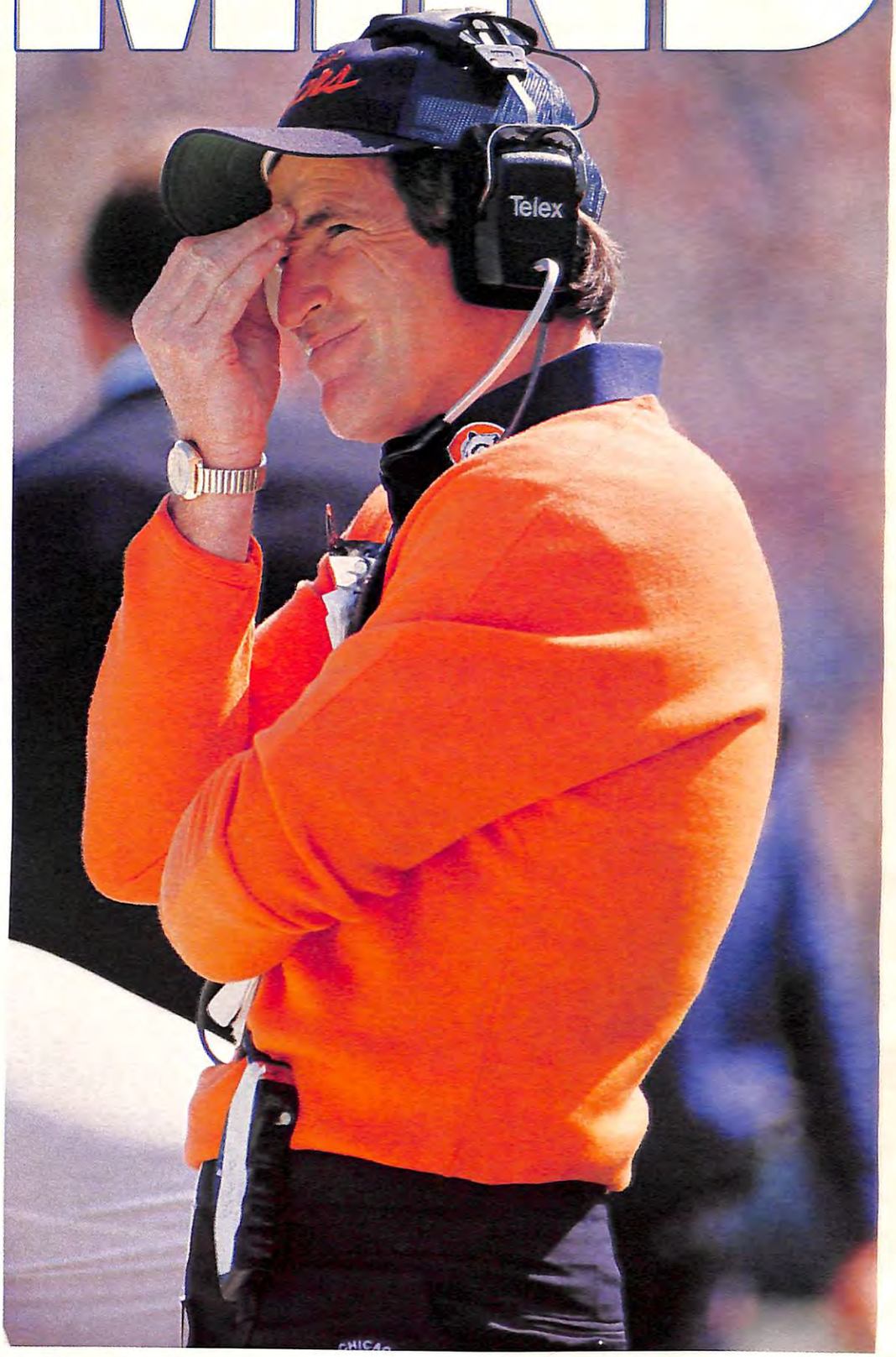
This was pro football's first extended experience with an unstoppable offense. In a single game in 1940, the Chicago Bears won the case for the T-formation with a 73-0 championship victory over the Washington Redskins. But last January's showing was the first time a great offense had slipped into another dimension and stayed there — for 12 straight quarters — until there were no more games to win.

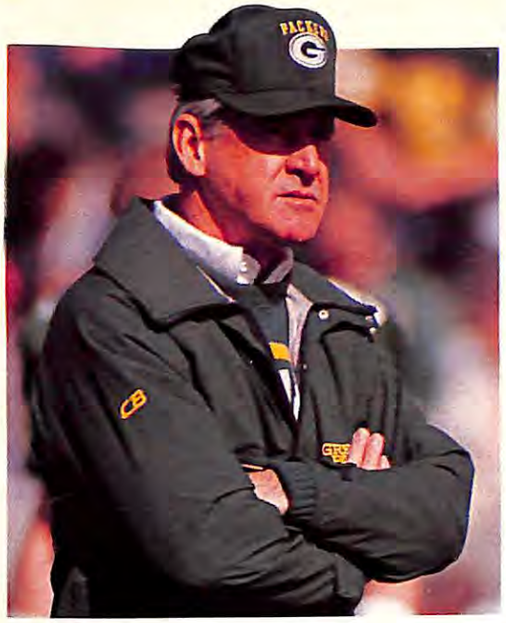
The meaning of this display lies in what it foretells. No one could run a 4-minute mile until Roger Bannister showed it was possible, after which athletes around the world did it routinely. No one could play basketball while suspended in space until Julius Erving left the ground, and now Larry Bird is the last great one still playing earthbound.

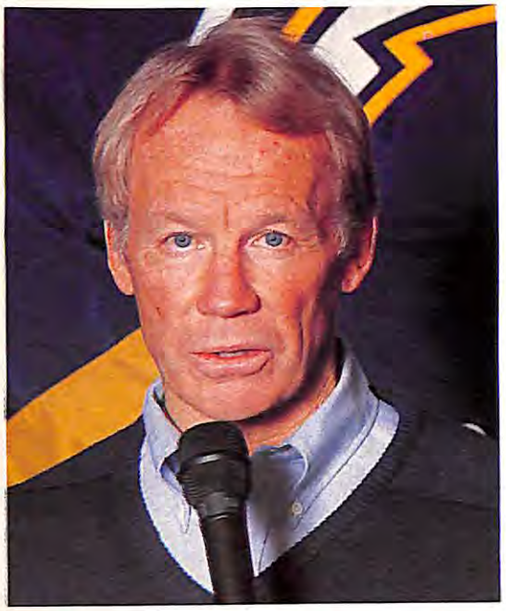
The NFL question for the next decade is whether offensive coaches and players, having seen football's next level, have the imagination and desire to make the step up. With all due respect for the physical basis of the game — power and guts still control the line of scrimmage — it now has been proven possible for an offense with skillful athletes and brilliant strategy to cruise the field nearly at will.

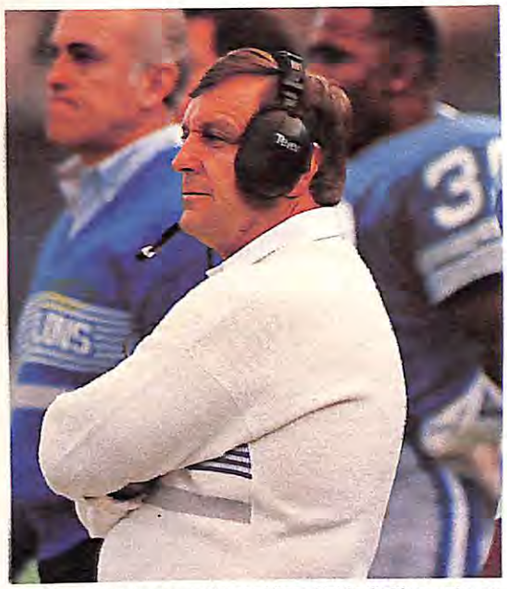
To old-line football purists, this development is distasteful. They want mano-a-mano in the mud, and they think the Great Rules Changes of '78 diluted the game by pandering to fans with cheap aerial thrills. But nostalgia for mayhem misses the point. Modern civilization is moving from mass to mind, and football is a game that mirrors its world.

The 49ers are here. And the Run and Shoot is coming.









Chicago defensive coordinator Vince Tobin (left) counts on confusion to throw off passers, while Detroit's Mouse Davis (above) proved last season that his pass-happy Run and Shoot doubles as a productive rushing offense. San Diego GM Bobby Beathard (middle), one of the game's foremost talent evaluators, admires San Francisco's balanced, cerebral approach: "I've heard a lot of coaches say the 49ers are the most unpredictable team in the league." Green Bay offensive guru Lindy Infante (top) realizes today's innovators are tomorrow's old guard. "Fifteen years from now, the football we play today is going to be called conservative and dull."

RUNNING AND SHOOTING

NFL strategists have been contemplating alternative formations — the "I," Ace, two-back, Shotgun — for many years. But, in truth, the most recent offensive innovation may eventually have the most significance. After 30 years of seeping upward, from high schools through Division II college ball, past Division I and the late United States Football League, the Run and Shoot has finally arrived in the NFL.

On surface inspection, the Run and Shoot is the ultimate post-rules change offensive system. Its philosophy reverses traditional football dogma. Rather than run first and get the pass by faking the run, Run and Shoot offenses look to pass first and get the run off the pass. It's the first offense redesigned to maximize the potential of the pass-first approach.

A Run and Shoot team fields four wide receivers, but (despite widespread misunderstanding) four wide receivers do not make the Run and Shoot. It is an intricate and fully integrated offense built on three basic features: (1) On almost every play the quarterback takes a short roll either right or left; (2) on many plays he slips the ball to the running back on a draw; and (3) the rest of the time he throws passes to receivers who have run routes based almost entirely on what the defense has done.

"We turn the passing game upside down," says June Jones, quarterback coach of the Detroit Lions, who last year became the first NFL team to embrace the full Run and Shoot. "Usually the offensive receiver runs his route and the defensive back reacts to that. But we let the defense make their moves, and then we react to them."

In a sense, the Run and Shoot is to passing what the Wishbone is to running. "It's an option pass offense," says Rod Dowhower, Washington's new passing coach. "The key is to keep the quarterback and the receivers on the same page in terms of what they read in the defense."

For most of last season, rival coaches still dismissed Detroit's Run and Shoot. But a team that started the season 0-5 ended it 5-0. The Lions won six of their last seven, and they did it with a quarterback and four receivers that most teams felt didn't belong in the league.

The one blue-chipper the Lions had was Barry Sanders, the Heisman Trophy rookie. The way the Run and Shoot earned mainstream NFL notice was to give Sanders the ball on the draw and have holes open up like a stage curtain. With minimally competent passing personnel, the Lions ran 58 percent of the time in their final five-game winning streak. "We'd been saying for years that the Run and Shoot is a great running system," says Mouse Davis, Detroit's offensive innovator. "I think last year we finally got some attention."

Indeed. The Run and Shoot threat became all too real for many coaches. "You have Sanders back there looking at you like a loaded gun," says Floyd Peters, defensive coordinator of the Minnesota Vikings. "If you use a dime defense, with six defensive backs to chase their four wide receivers, you only have five guys up front. They have five blockers for Sanders. Those aren't good odds.

"If you go with the nickel, you have six guys up front. Now you have the run under control, but you have at least three defensive backs one-on-one with wide receivers. If the Lions go out and get some quicker receivers, everybody's in trouble."

Says Houston Oilers head coach Jack Pardee, "All you have to do is count. The defense can't have six guys playing run and six guys playing pass. Plus, you have receivers spread all over and bigger splits in the line. It's impossible for the defense to gang up on you."

Pardee is going to install the full-out Run and Shoot in Houston this year. That has folks scared right away. With Warren Moon, a mobile quarterback possessing a laser arm, four quality wide receivers, and three years experience running some of the downfield Run and Shoot patterns, the Oilers have all the ingredients for a scoring explosion. If Moon adjusts to the up-close, half-roll feel, after years in the league's deepest Shotgun, modern football may be pushed to its logical extreme.

Says Pardee, "We're going to try to have some fun."

THE FUTURE MAY REST IN THE PAST

Former 49ers head coach Bill Walsh has helped make the pass-first theory respectable, but he did so from a traditional formation. While the '80s witnessed the rise of an assortment of high-tech offensive schemes, the 49ers lined up — and still do — in the formation dominant 30 years ago.

"Their pass patterns and reads are magnificent," says Bill Polian, general manager of the Buffalo Bills. "But where have you seen their basic look before? Two backs, two wide receivers, the tight end plays a major role. They have mobile guards. They run the power sweep and the fullback counter off of it. They throw to their backs. Who does this look like? To me it looks like Vince Lombardi's Green Bay Packers."

The Packers used to establish themselves by running off tackle. The 49ers, however, do so with the three-step pass. Walsh produced a revolution within a stable tradition by proving a team could grind it out with short, brightly conceived, ball-control passes. "The 49ers don't want the ball in the air very long," says Washington's Dowhower, who coached under Walsh at Stanford University. "Walsh designed his pass plays to produce a clear throwing lane to the primary receiver, like a pitcher throwing to a catcher. And the ball goes out quickly. He didn't want the quarterback standing in the pocket holding the ball."

If the primary receiver wasn't open, one of Walsh's tenets was not only to have second and third receivers available, but to have them in the same general area as the primary receiver, and at roughly the same distance from the quarterback.

In other words, he didn't force his quarterback to turn from one sideline to the other, or to suddenly gather for a much longer throw after planning a short one. "You can see it working, see Joe Montana go from his first receiver to his second or third," says Dowhower. "Much of what we are seeing in San Francisco now is the culmination of Montana in that system for more than 10 years."

The 49ers throw a lot of quick slants, short crisscross patterns and outlet passes to the backs. They try to hit receivers on the move across the field, running away from their cover men or crossing through openings in a zone. A receiver in motion can turn a 4-yard pass into an 80-yard score.

And they work assiduously to get the ball to all five receivers. Fullback Tom Rathman, who in four years as a blocking back at Nebraska hardly saw the ball in the air, led NFL backs last year with 73 catches. His concentration and precise use of his hands speak of the astute scouting and careful coaching he has received in San Francisco. "You have to like what they do up there," says San Diego Chargers general manager Bobby Beathard. "Not a lot of coaches would even think of using Tom Rathman as a pass receiver."

The upshot is that San Francisco will pass on any down and throw to any receiver. By using every tool they have on the field, the 49ers keep defenses from zeroing in. "It's very difficult to figure out what the 49ers are going to do," Beathard says. "I've heard a lot of coaches say they are the most unpredictable team in the league."

If San Francisco represents football in the '90s, then teams aspiring to be unstoppable must emphasize the pass, throwing quickly to all possible receivers, blending in the run — and surprising opponents on every play.

THE QUICK-PASSING WAVE

Walsh took the lead to quick-rhythm passing, and many teams have followed suit. This is one way offenses have neutralized the blitz. If a quarterback can throw the ball before the onslaught arrives, the offensive line doesn't have to block every blitzer. A short pass into the area just vacated by a blitzer can often turn into a big play.

Not all short passing games have the same scheme. Packers head coach Lindy Infante, for instance, who tutored Bernie Kosar when he was offensive coordinator for the Cleveland Browns, now has made an overachiever of Don Majkowski in Green Bay.

Infante's scheme is based on the "choice" route, where the receiver is coached to break sharply and run away from a man-to-man defender (either right or left, whichever is easiest), or to stop cold in a seam against zones. Because the Packers see a lot of zones, Infante's receivers are often standing still at the moment of the catch.

The Los Angeles Rams, to take another example, use the pass offense offensive coordinator Ernie Zampese brought up from the experimental hothouse Don Coryell ran for years in San Diego. Zampese likes his Rams quarterbacks to hit receivers moving forward rather than having them stop or move horizontally across the field. Jim Everett lets the ball go quickly, but he often leads his receivers upfield, into the seam between deep zones. A pass that would be caught at 10 yards, if the receiver stopped, is caught at 20 on the dead run.

Whatever the approach, one result is the same. "People are throwing the ball a lot more now than they were even a

year or two ago," says Vince Tobin, defensive coordinator of the Chicago Bears. "We had people throwing at us 50 and 60 times a game last year."

Says Richie Petitbon, defensive coordinator of the Washington Redskins, "The trend is definitely to the passing game. Teams are using three and four wide receivers and really stretching the defense out. It creates a lot of holes if you try to play zone."

THE RUNNING REARGUARD

A vocal minority around the league, however, thinks all this passing has gotten out of hand. Bears head coach Mike Ditka still wants to jam it at you in Chicago. Giants head coach Bill Parcells counts number of carries, rather than yards gained, as his indicator of successful offense. And in Buffalo, head coach Marv Levy, who once ran a Wing-T while coaching the Kansas City Chiefs, still is convinced of the run's virtues.

"I read *USA Today* every Monday," Levy says, "and I look at one statistic: Which team ran the ball the most times? Last year was typical. The team that ran the most won 82 percent of the time."

Levy knows the trap in this statistic. A passing team may still pile up a lot of carries while killing the clock in the second half (the 49ers do this all the time), and a running team may pass on its last 20 plays in a row if behind. "The statistic can fool you," Levy says. "My conclusion is not that you should run and keep on running even if they stop you. My conclusion is that to take command of a game and *keep* command of a game, you have to be able to run the ball effectively."

Buffalo's Polian is, if anything, more emphatic about the run. "I know our division (AFC East) the best," he says. "And I'll tell you that in our group I think the trend is going to be away from passing. One of the reasons is pretty basic. There aren't many quarterbacks coming out of college these days, but there are a lot of outstanding runners. You do what you can."

While this run-dominant psychology appears to be a minority position in a pass-happy era, it's easy to find coaches who emphasize balance. "You have to be able to run and pass," says Houston's Pardee. "You can't say you are going to do just one thing and let the defense gang up on you."

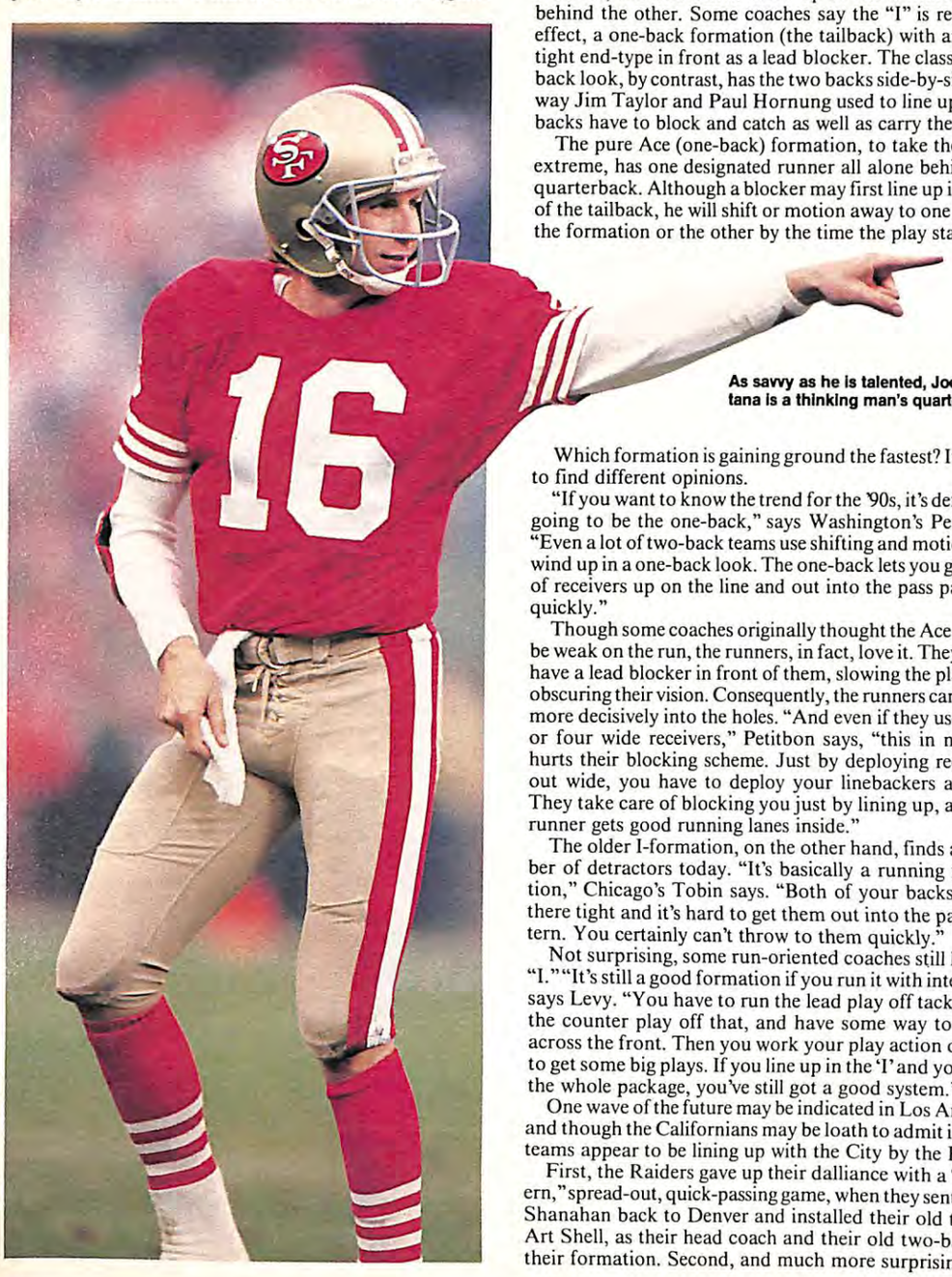
Says Fritz Shurmur, defensive coordinator of the Rams, "You've got to have a sophisticated passing game to be able to come from behind and win a close one at the end. But you also need a running game to establish your toughness as a team. As a defensive coach, I can tell you that any team that can move the ball both ways complicates your challenge a great deal."

THE LINEUP

It's one thing to decide whether to run or pass. It's another to decide how to line up in the first place. Will the 49ers' success in the '80s bring back the old two-back look in the '90s?

First we need to define terms. The I-formation, for instance, has two backs lined up in the backfield, one behind the other. Some coaches say the "I" is really, in effect, a one-back formation (the tailback) with an extra tight end-type in front as a lead blocker. The classic two-back look, by contrast, has the two backs side-by-side, the way Jim Taylor and Paul Hornung used to line up. Both backs have to block and catch as well as carry the ball.

The pure Ace (one-back) formation, to take the other extreme, has one designated runner all alone behind the quarterback. Although a blocker may first line up in front of the tailback, he will shift or motion away to one side of the formation or the other by the time the play starts.



As savvy as he is talented, Joe Montana is a thinking man's quarterback.

Which formation is gaining ground the fastest? It's easy to find different opinions.

"If you want to know the trend for the '90s, it's definitely going to be the one-back," says Washington's Petitbon. "Even a lot of two-back teams use shifting and motion and wind up in a one-back look. The one-back lets you get a lot of receivers up on the line and out into the pass patterns quickly."

Though some coaches originally thought the Ace would be weak on the run, the runners, in fact, love it. They don't have a lead blocker in front of them, slowing the play and obscuring their vision. Consequently, the runners can move more decisively into the holes. "And even if they use three or four wide receivers," Petitbon says, "this in no way hurts their blocking scheme. Just by deploying receivers out wide, you have to deploy your linebackers as well. They take care of blocking you just by lining up, and the runner gets good running lanes inside."

The older I-formation, on the other hand, finds a number of detractors today. "It's basically a running formation," Chicago's Tobin says. "Both of your backs are in there tight and it's hard to get them out into the pass pattern. You certainly can't throw to them quickly."

Not surprising, some run-oriented coaches still like the "I." "It's still a good formation if you run it with integrity," says Levy. "You have to run the lead play off tackle, and the counter play off that, and have some way to hit all across the front. Then you work your play action off that to get some big plays. If you line up in the 'I' and you have the whole package, you've still got a good system."

One wave of the future may be indicated in Los Angeles, and though the Californians may be loath to admit it, their teams appear to be lining up with the City by the Bay.

First, the Raiders gave up their dalliance with a "modern," spread-out, quick-passing game, when they sent Mike Shanahan back to Denver and installed their old tackle, Art Shell, as their head coach and their old two-back as their formation. Second, and much more surprising, the Rams are shifting from one back to two. Long the master of tailback football, Rams head coach John Robinson has allowed the passing trend to catch up with him.

"Over the years our tailback has carried on 80 percent of our runs and blocked on 80 percent of our passes," Robinson says. "We need to adjust that balance. We are going to turn the dial in the direction of two backs in the old tradition, a move we have structured from the passing standpoint."

IS THERE A SHOTGUN IN THE FUTURE?

If any formation has a high-tech look, it's the Shotgun. With receivers strung out left and right and the quarterback already back in passing position, the 'Gun surely looks like the passing formation *par excellence*.

The formation isn't new. In the '30s, the Packers' Arnie Herber pinwheeled rainbows to Don Hutson and Johnny Blood from a sideline-to-sideline formation called simply the "Spread." The '40s saw Redskin Sammy Baugh sidearm darts from a tighter double wing. But it wasn't until some 35 years later that the Dallas Cowboys brought the wide-open, all-pass formation back into the game.

In modern play, the Shotgun's chief attraction is that it keeps the quarterback out of reach of the blitz. "It's hard to get to him when he lines up so deep," says Petitbon. "Even if you get one of your people scot-free, the quarterback can still get rid of the football before he gets there. The pass may be incomplete, but you don't get the big hit and the sack."

Keeping the quarterback untouched is one key to passing well. "The best pass defense is still to splatter the quarterback," says Minnesota's Peters. "You want to get a painful hit. You want to get his eyes watering. You want him worrying about something besides where his open receiver is. If you can't get those hits, it's tough to play pass defense."

Despite the Shotgun's advantages of protecting and preserving the quarterback, there is a strong tide building against its use. Al Davis of the Raiders likes to point out that since Dallas no team which uses the Shotgun has won a Super Bowl. What's more, the two dominant teams of the '80s — the Redskins, who went to three Super Bowls and won two, and the 49ers, who went to four and won them all — have abstained from using the Shotgun.

"I think the Shotgun has two serious shortcomings," says Walsh. "In the first place, you can't use your trick plays from the Shotgun — your draws and screens and quick traps. In the second place, when you get into a noisy stadium, your linemen can't hear the quarterback."

Although the Shotgun is well-designed for downfield passes, it doesn't lend itself to the modern quick-rhythm game. "You can't get quick passes off," says Pardee. "If your receiver makes a quick break, the quarterback hasn't got a grip on the ball yet. That takes away a lot of your blitz adjustment routes."

Worse, the Shotgun disintegrates an offense, splitting the run from the pass. The non-Shotgun 49ers use two backs and two wide receivers on both first-and-10 and third-and-long. The quarterback always turns and runs past the backs, so he can always hand off for a run, or fake it and pass. He can also drop straight back to pass, or fake that and run (with the draw). The offense is completely integrated, and the defense never knows what is coming.

On a Shotgun team, the offense may line up in an Ace or two-back set on first-and-10, then shift into the Shotgun on third-and-long. It can run in the first set but not in the second — at least not very well. The Denver Broncos' pathetic shovel passes last Super Bowl symbolized the impotence of the Shotgun running threat.

The subtle danger is that the offense gets in the habit of running while in the base formation, then passing from the Shotgun. The defense only faces one threat at a time, and stops them both. Coaches point to the Oilers of the past several years as a prime example. A team of great personnel and many big plays, Houston could never generate the offensive consistency to dominate big games.

PRESSURE DEFENSE VS. ZONE DEFENSE

Prime-time victories, however, don't come by offense alone. Defenses are determined to hold up their end — doing everything to invest their own approaches with increased intelligence. Still, as defensive coordinators insist, the modern defensive side of the game is definitely in trouble.

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receiver now," says Petitbon, "we see a lot more of the small, quick, talented receivers. And now that offensive linemen can use their hands, it's very difficult to get a consistent pass rush. Great rushers can beat bad blockers sometimes, but when they face a worthy opponent, even the great ones have trouble getting through."

In the mid-'80s, it seemed defensive people had found the answer to this offensive advantage: rush more people than the offense had blockers. Led by Buddy Ryan, then coordinator of a Bears defense that sent rival offenses home in small pieces, coaches began to blitz what seemed like entire rosters. It was a street gang solution to the highly skilled offensive threat, and, for a while, football developed into a series of train wreck collisions in the pocket.

This trend — what coordinators call "pressure defense" — may have peaked last October. In Weeks 2 and 3 of the regular season, the teams' points-per-game averages swelled up to 50, a 20 percent increase compared to other weeks of the season and the previous two seasons. It was a blast heard by defensive coordinators all around the league.

"I think a lot of those early-season points came as a result of pressure defenses," says the Rams' Shurmur. "When you rush a lot of people, you expose yourself to big plays. What you saw after those first weeks was that a lot of coaches enamored with the big pass rush — a lot of people involved in the 'go-sic-'em' blitzing philosophy — were laying back and playing zones."

Green Bay's Infante agrees. "Many quarterbacks are becoming skilled enough now to react quickly to blitzes," he says. "And when you blitz, you leave those talented wide receivers single-covered. I do think we saw some people backing off of pressure defense as the year progressed."

That meant an increase in zone coverage, but not a return to the static zones seen in the '70s. In the old days, a zone defender would simply run to a spot on the field and wait there in the center of his zone until he saw the ball in the air. The good news was that he would not "bite" on a fake and get pulled out of position. The bad news was that there was far too much room between defenders, room into which a good modern passer could throw an unbroken sequence of easy completions.

For this reason, modern-day zone defenders watch the movements of the receivers and the eyes of the quarterback, in order to get a head start in the play's direction. "What's the use of defending parts of the field where the offense has no receivers?" asks Shurmur. "Why should I stay over here if the quarterback has zeroed in over there? To play zone today you have to read the pass pattern. You have to read the quarterback. You have to find ways to tighten up those zones."

The move toward zone defenses has included a tactic once thought suicidal — the use of zones to defend your own goal line. The coaches' handbook used to say that zones were good in the middle of the field, where offenses would have to find dead spots between zones on five or six passes in a row to move downfield. But on the goal line, where one completion means six points, the zone was considered a curse.

Not for long. Pass offenses found ways to beat man-to-man coverage in close quarters by criss-crossing receivers to rub defenders off, or by lofting the little fade pass over a defender's turned back in the corner of the end zone.

"You're seeing a lot more zone in the Red Zone (inside the 20)," says Polian. "Coaches are realizing you can confuse quarterbacks by playing complex zone defenses. And down in tight like that, the zones don't get so loose. The offense has run out of field."

31 FLAVORS OF DEFENSE

Despite new-and-improved zones, most defensive coaches don't think you can simply sit in them all day against a multi-threat offense. The Broncos tried that against the 49ers and watched the scoreboard whir like a gas pump dial.

Defense has come to such a pass, in fact, that no one approach seems to have much singular impact. The old notion of a solid base defense, one played so well that no team could beat it, has evaporated. "You see more and more multiple things on defense," says the Rams' Robinson. "You used to see a team fit a pattern over some period of time. A defensive coordinator would say, 'This is the scheme I like and I'm going to use it my whole career.' Now you see teams using a wide variety of things, and changing up every week."

It takes smarter coaches and players to prepare many different types of defense, rather than drilling the same one endlessly. Circumstances force this mental investment. "You've got to have a package that includes some zone, some man-to-man, some blitzing — and you have to do them all equally effectively," says the Bears' Tobin. "If the offense knows what defense you're in, they can take you apart today. But if they don't know before the snap what you are doing, it puts some doubt in their minds. You can confuse them, especially the quarterback."

Defenses these days change players as frequently as their tactics. They run specialists in and out to fit a given down-and-distance situation, and continually confront the offense with different looks and different challenges. "I'm convinced this is where the game is going," says Shurmur. "You've got to get the most out of every player on your roster."

In an earlier era, football coaches would shape their players to their schemes: "My way or the highway." But as the NFL heads into the '90s, more and more defensive coaches are deliberately taking advantage of differing talents available on their roster. In this way, teams can present the offense with a wider range of problems.

"You can't be locked in and egotistical any more," Shurmur says. "If you won't adjust your defensive plans to the people you have, that's a commitment to die in this league. You don't get a vast amount of players who can fit into a single scheme and do everything well.

"But usually all the players on your roster can do at least *one* thing well. You've got to find a way in your scheme to plug that player in and get the most out of his talent. And I think it's good, because it forces guys who have been in coaching a long time to re-examine their thinking and find a better way."

As was the case for offense, the prototype for the defense of the future is San Francisco. Since the first 49ers Super Bowl in 1981, Walsh had his defense changing alignments, shifting coverages and shuttling people in and out. Throughout the '80s, the 49ers played championship defense with one Hall of Famer, defensive back Ronnie Lott, and a mixed assortment of others only reasonably skilled. They performed at such a high level because they did the one thing necessary: everything.

DEFENSE BY THIEVERY

Even with maximum use of variety, it's hard to find a defensive coordinator today who thinks he can simply shut a good offense down. If a team has athletes and creativity, it's going to move the ball. So instead of trying to choke the life out of an offense play after play, defenses are geared increasingly toward forcing the occasional miscue that will stop a drive or turn the ball over. "You can't sit in one defense," says Petitbon. "You've got to mix it up and force them into bad plays."

Teams are focusing on stripping the ball away from runners. If you can't keep teams from making yardage, at least you can treat every play as another chance to grab the ball.

"Defenses are going more for turnovers," says Tobin. "The offense is throwing the ball more, moving it down the field. One way to get it back is strip it out — or knock it out. It's a big-play type of defense, but that also means it's a high-risk type of defense. You see a lot more missed tackles around the league, and that's because people are preoccupied with getting the ball. They try to pull it out and the guy keeps on running. Or they try for the great hit to knock the ball loose, instead of wrapping the guy up."

All in all, the '90s do not figure as an ideal time to run an NFL defense. If you play it safe and sane, offenses will nibble you to death, and if you play it wild and loose, they'll take you downtown. Defensive coordinators can only hope that offenses won't press their advantage, or that the league rules committee will come to the rescue.

IT'S ALL IN THEIR HEAD

What all this means is that professional football is fast becoming a think-first affair. As the NFL rushes into the last decade of the second millennium, A.D., the game will produce more complex strategies, designed with the smartest, not necessarily the strongest, players in mind. While coaches took the play-calling away from quarterbacks during the '80s, the intellectual rigor of the game now demands that the on-field signal-callers get involved again.

"The mental aspects of the game are coming back for the quarterback," says Robinson. "In Johnny Unitas' time, the game was simpler and quarterbacks called the plays. Then the game became more complex and coaches took the play-calling away.

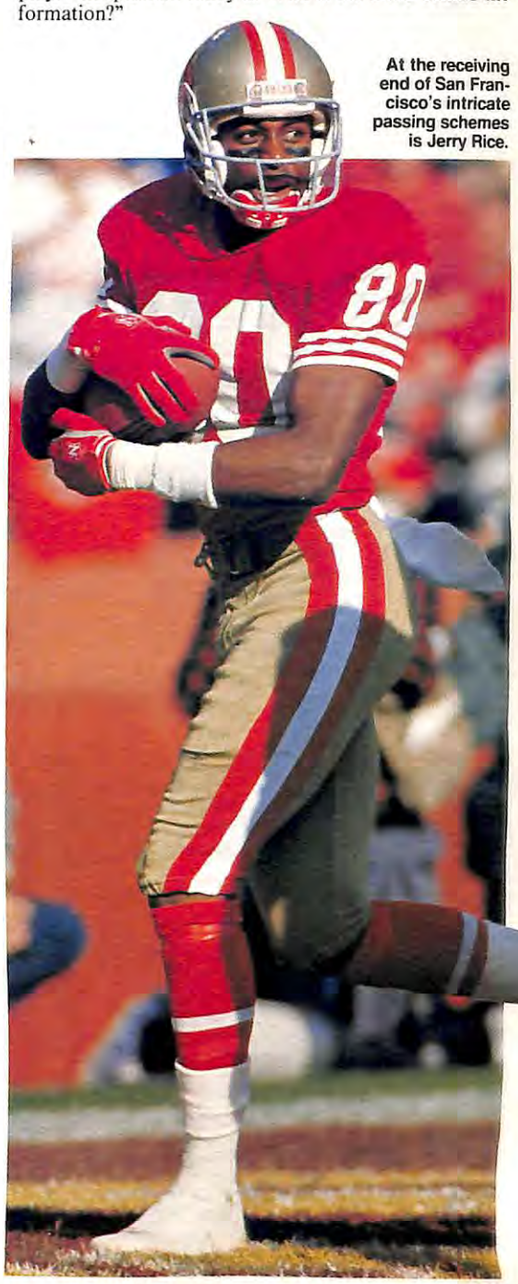
"Now the game has become further complicated, and the coach can no longer predict with any certainty what defense he will see. He needs the quarterback to give an extra dimension, to check the defensive alignment and make one last decision. That's why you see quarterbacks calling many more audibles today. In this game you find that you have more problems to solve with every season."

Coaches are hardly abdicating their mental responsibilities. With offensive and defensive creativity so important, they spend every offseason studying videotape and developing new plans. Then they adjust their approach every week of the season. "There are a lot of innovative coaches in this league, and every one of them is looking for a way to get the upper hand," says Infante. "Fifteen years from now the football we play today is going to be called conservative and dull."

Yet the game today is more wide open and creative than the game played two or three decades ago. Where there was once a "pro look," a stereotyped approach used by nearly every team, now most teams have a unique personality, a distinctive style that sets them apart from their competitors. This style is a product of the intelligence of the coach.

Thus, in the NFL, mind has gained what may be a permanent ascendancy over matter. The league's draft helps spread playing talent equally around the league — there is an even distribution of bodies, or "material," as coaches say. But this "material" basis of the sport does not determine who goes to the Super Bowl. The teams that win most often are the teams that think best.

"It's not just a question of what formation you use," says San Diego's Beathard. "You can win with one back. You can win with two. The question is not what formation you play. The question today is: Who is the mind behind the formation?"



At the receiving end of San Francisco's intricate passing schemes is Jerry Rice.

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WHY THE NFC IS BETTER

They were ready, this time around. With three Super Bowl whippings behind them, the Denver Broncos came to the Louisiana Superdome Jan. 28, 1990, equipped with a new, aggressive defense and a power running attack. The "let's-get-physical" Broncos were set for anything the NFC champion San Francisco 49ers could throw (or run) at them. Owner Pat Bowlen was literally guaranteeing a Super Bowl victory, basking in the underdog role.

Then came the game. San Francisco 55, Denver 10.

So much for being prepared. Once again, the Broncos' dream of a Super Bowl trophy had been torched by a vastly superior team. And when the smoke cleared inside the Superdome, the National Football Conference had captured its sixth straight Super Bowl, eighth in the '80s, laying further claim to its NFL dominance.

Perhaps it's not fair to draw such a broad conclusion from just one contest. But take a look around, folks. In case you haven't noticed, the gap between the NFC and AFC is beginning to grow. . .with little relief in sight. For if Denver is the best the AFC can offer, what does that say for the rest of the conference? And would the AFC's 1989 playoff lot of Browns, Bills, Steelers and Oilers matched up any better with the NFC's Rams, Vikings, Giants and Eagles? Rumors around the league persist that the AFC teams had gotten together prior to the playoffs and elected Denver as the AFC's latest sacrificial lamb. After all, with Super drubbings of 27-10 (Dallas, 1978), 39-20 (New York Giants, 1987) and 42-10 (Washington, 1988), the Broncos were certainly the applicant with the most experience.

Few today question the NFC's superiority. "The NFC is dominant because it wins the Super Bowl, which determines the strength of the conferences," said Hank Stram, radio and TV analyst and former Kansas City Chiefs and Super Bowl coach.

So, will Antiquated Football Confederation become the new definition of AFC? It's one thing to observe the chasm between the conferences, quite another to gain an understanding of the turnabout that began in the '70s, when the AFC had most of the cards and raked in most of the Super Bowl pots.

Dig no further than the AFL-NFL merger. Following Baltimore, Cleveland and Pittsburgh's defection to the AFC in 1970, the NFC fattened up on the new head-to-head competition, piling up a 50-27-3 regular season superiority. The feast didn't last long. In 1972, the AFC forced top billing and for nine seasons, through 1980, compiled a snazzy 220-149-3 record against its "senior" rivals. Add to that an 8-1 run in Super Bowls.

The AFC's "Big Three" — Oakland (25-4), Miami (24-4), Pittsburgh (23-5) — starred in the AFC swing, and those same teams also accounted for the eight Super Bowl wins. The rest of the AFC was no slouch, either, winning its share, 148-136-3, from the NFC. Only four NFC teams had winning marks against AFC competition in the '70s: Dallas (22-8), Minnesota (18-13), Detroit (17-13-1) and the LA Rams (20-11).

Then came 1981 and the NFC takeover, ignited by San Francisco's surprise orbit that culminated in the first of four Super Bowl conquests. From 1981 through 1989, though the NFC maintained only a slight 225-222-3 margin in interconference games, the NFC made a dramatic turnaround, going from a .398 success ratio against AFC competition in the '70s to .503 in the '80s.

Consider the New Orleans Saints. From 1970-86, the Saints were 12-42-2 against AFC opponents. Since then, New Orleans has been a perfect 12-0. In 1988, the Saints defeated the Raiders, San Diego and Denver for the first time, and last season, they recorded their first victory over New England.

No kryptonite, no can of spinach, not even Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles can account for the NFC's rise to super-hero status. It is a strength forged by many reasons, a strength even Dick Tracy can figure out.

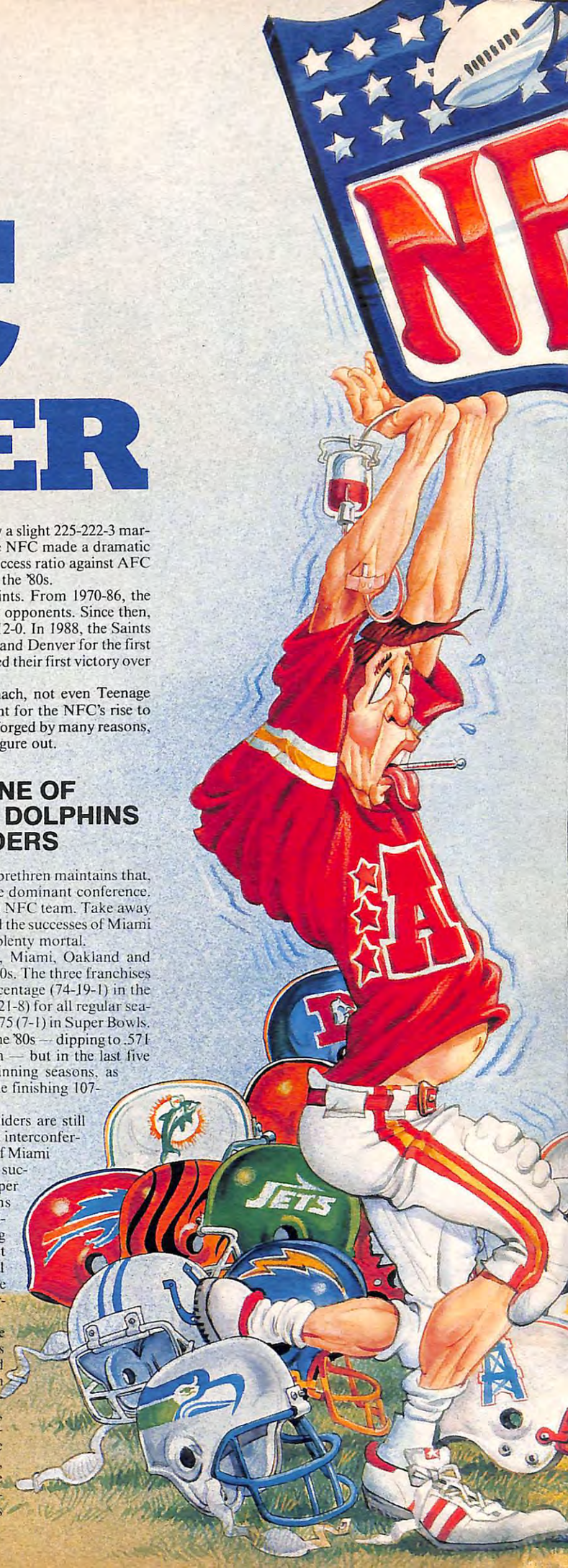
THE DECLINE OF THE STEELERS, DOLPHINS AND RAIDERS

One theory embraced by NFL brethren maintains that, even in the '70s, the NFC was the dominant conference. Pittsburgh, you see, was *really* an NFC team. Take away the Steelers' four Super Bowls and the successes of Miami and Oakland, and the AFC was plenty mortal.

Indeed, for practical purposes, Miami, Oakland and Pittsburgh were the AFC in the '70s. The three franchises combined for a .796 winning percentage (74-19-1) in the rivalry with the NFC, .711 (303-121-8) for all regular season games, and an even flashier .875 (7-1) in Super Bowls. The threesome didn't do badly in the '80s — dipping to .571 (260-195-1) for the regular season — but in the last five years combined for only five winning seasons, as compared to six losing ones, while finishing 107-110 overall.

Miami, Pittsburgh and the Raiders are still the three NFL teams with the best interconference records over the two decades. If Miami could translate its regular season success against NFC clubs into Super Bowl supremacy, the Dolphins would need more trophy cases. Nobody comes close to their amazing .818 success ratio (54-12) against the NFC. The Raiders are 47-23-1 in that span, the Steelers 44-24, while Dallas is the NFC leader in interconference play at 42-25.

Al LoCasale, Raiders executive assistant, maintained the AFC's glory run in the '70s had a solid basis. "I thought the old American Football League teams, who contributed most conference members, dominated because they had a different approach. They were more wide open on offense and defense, much more speed-oriented. The AFLers used tight ends and running backs as deep receiving threats



By Russell S. Baxter

in the passing game, while the NFC was more conservative and had never done this. Defensively, the old AFL teams went with the 3-4 set long before it was popular throughout the league.

"But none of that old AFL edge applies today, because coaches have crossed and recrossed conference lines so many times."

THE NFC HAS BETTER DEFENSIVE LINES

Center Blair Bush, a 12-year veteran of Cincinnati, Seattle and Green Bay, has little doubt the NFC is the stronger conference: "The NFC dominates because, on the average, it has better defensive lines."

His "hands-on" research consists primarily of butting heads and slamming bodies. Had he crunched statistics instead, he would have come to the same conclusions:

- An NFC team led the league in rushing defense in all but one of the past 10 seasons, with that lone exception the strike-shortened, nine-game campaign of '82.
- No AFC squad has led the league in total defense since 1983, when the Bengals were rated the No. 1 unit in yards allowed. Ironically, that year also marked the last time an AFC team (the Raiders) captured the Super Bowl.
- Interception statistics, a reflection of defensive line strength and pressure, clearly favor the NFC. In the last five seasons, the NFC has picked off 119 more passes than its conference rival. NFC pass thieves have out-totaled their AFC counterparts in seven of the past 10 seasons.

- Sack totals tell the same story, with NFC defenders racking up 587 more sacks over the decade, including an incredible plus-439 margin over the past six years.

In 1989, seven of the top eight defenses against the rush played in the NFC. Only Denver (sixth) cracked that elite list. The average NFC defense grudgingly surrendered 110.3 rushing yards per game a year ago, while the AFC was permitting 121.1 yards. That spread was more pronounced in 1988 with NFC squads giving up 111.3 yards per game on the ground to the AFC's 131.5 average.

Tom Jackson, ESPN television analyst and former All-Pro linebacker with Denver, doesn't have to consult record books to make his point. Just visit a Pro Bowl practice.

"There were great athletes on both sides of the field, but there were about five physical specimens from the NFC who would dominate anywhere, anytime," Jackson said, noting Keith Millard (defensive tackle, Minnesota), Reggie White (defensive end, Philadelphia), Chris Doleman (defensive end, Minnesota), Charles Mann (defensive end, Washington) and Tim Harris (linebacker, Green Bay) last February in Honolulu.

"To me, they all looked about 6-7, 290, and cut from stone. They were playing catch and running pass patterns and I thought, 'My goodness, look at those people!' You couldn't help but be impressed with their athletic skills. Yes, there were great defensive players for the AFC, but there was only one guy who resembled the other five, Bruce Smith (defensive end, Buffalo). He fit into the NFC defensive mold."

Led by such defensive giants, NFC sack specialists simply have overwhelmed AFC counterparts over the past three years. Last season, San Diego defensive end Lee Williams paced the AFC with 14 quarterback take-downs, but that was only good enough for eighth overall behind the NFC's Doleman (21 sacks), Harris (19½), Millard (18), the Rams' Kevin Greene (16½), New Orleans' Pat Swilling (16½), Philadelphia's Clyde Simmons (15½) and the NY Giants' Lawrence Taylor (15).

The trend was even more obvious in 1988 when the NFC owned nine of the NFL's top 10 sack artists. In 1987, it was nine of the top 12. Why doesn't the AFC have as many of the game's top-of-the-class pass rushers?

"There's not that big a shortage," said Chicago Bears scout Ken Geiger. "It's evidently the way they (AFC) drafted.... It goes back to the drawing board and your personnel people. What are they looking for? Are they going for need or the best athlete?... Still, you can't come out and say they (AFC) are drafting wrong. It just works out that you have to put a lot into your defensive coordinator and head coach. What kind of a philosophy do they have?"

Pittsburgh Steelers president Dan Rooney thinks the dominating defensive lineman of the '70s is at least an endangered species, if not a vanishing breed. "There is just a lack of good ones," he said. "There were only three outstanding defensive linemen in the 1990 draft. Pro teams today are lucky to have one outstanding athlete for the defensive line, and I think back to our 'Steel Curtain' of the '70s and how lucky we were to have four at the same time — Joe Greene, Dwight White, L.C. Greenwood, Ernie Holmes. Now, more good linebackers show up and that reflects the increased emphasis on passing in not only the colleges but the high schools from where we inherit our talent."

In San Francisco, 49ers vice president of football administration John McVay isn't so sure of the NFC's dominance. Or perhaps he *is* sure and he doesn't want any potentially inflammatory comments to be posted on an AFC locker-room wall.

"People say NFC defenses are more dominating, but I don't know how much validity you can put in that, or how anybody could ensure it will continue," McVay said. "If we get promised expansion and realignment of the divisions, we'll stir up this whole domination subject anew. I do know that despite the Super Bowl scores, we have as much trouble with AFC teams as those in our own NFC. Hey, that Super Bowl two years ago (against Cincinnati) could easily have gone the other way without that super drive at the end by (Joe) Montana."

New York Giants defensive coordinator Bill Belichick doesn't necessarily buy the conference talent gap theory, either. "There are some pretty good AFC defensive teams," he said, citing Cleveland

and Kansas City and '89 improvements by Denver and San Diego. "I don't think our conference puts any more stress on run defense than the AFC. Everybody in the league emphasizes this. Maybe they (AFC teams) don't play against as good a group of runners."

THE NFC HAS BETTER RUNNING BACKS

"Pass for show but run for dough" sums up the NFL formula for success. And the NFC had nearly one-third more 1,000-yard rushers — 59 to the AFC's 42 — in its dominant decade. Some 13 NFC runners topped 1,000 yards more than once in the '80s, compared to seven in the AFC. That's not counting "cross-over" repeaters like Eric Dickerson (seven times with four-plus in the NFC, two-plus in the AFC), Greg Bell (twice in NFC, once in AFC) and Earnest Jackson (once in each conference).

Want another reason why the NFC dominates this statistic? Again, veteran center Bush: "Since the NFC, in my estimation, already has better defensive lines, it must build better offensive lines because it is facing these defenses more often in a season. If NFC teams don't build better offensive lines, they wouldn't have much of a rushing game, period."

Blend a tremendous ground game with a solid defense and it adds up to a championship. Take the Bears in 1985 and the Giants in '86, or both Redskins title teams ('82, '87) in this decade. And those who call the 49ers a purely finesse team are ignoring a fearsome ground attack paced by Roger Craig and Wendell Tyler, and lately, the tandem of Craig and Tom Rathman. San Francisco's attack has been a lethal balance of hard-nosed running and precision passing, a cerebral system with great continuity.

Remember also that in nine of the last 10 Super Bowls, the conference champions ranked no worse than fifth in total rushing yardage in their respective conferences. Never underestimate the value of rushing *attempts*, either. Again, all but one of the Super Bowl kings of the '80s were at least fifth in their conferences in total running plays.

Over the course of the decade, the top five rushing attempt teams in each division had winning or break-even seasons 85 percent of the time. Applying the same yardstick to the top five pass attempt teams in each division, the result was a winning or break-even season 48 percent of the time, with only four Super Bowl finalists on that list, none a champion.

The key to offensive success is balance. The NFC has built its balanced attacks, and its subsequent passing effectiveness, through first establishing sound rushing games.

COLD WEATHER AND GRASS FIELDS

So, fine. Running teams tend to win more games. Then it also makes sense that when the mercury drops, teams do more handing off than dropping back.

"When you get into those cold November and December games, you'd better be able to run the football because you won't survive on passing alone," noted Stram, who characterized the NFC as "more prone to toughness because it is so run-oriented. This emphasis is an extension of the respective coaching staffs and the fact there are many cold weather teams."

From a strict geographic standpoint, both conferences have the same number of cold weather ports — Chicago, Detroit, Green Bay, Minnesota, New York, Philadelphia and Washington in the NFC; Buffalo, Cleveland, Cincinnati, New England, New York, Pittsburgh and Kansas City in the AFC. While the NFC's Lions and Vikings have gone indoors, the other five NFC ice harbors put such an emphasis on the running game that they force division opponents to do the same.

Wade Phillips, Denver defensive coordinator who has plotted defenses in both conferences, reminds that where and whom you play generally dictates your style. "This is probably true more in a division than the conference," he said. "A division takes on its own personality. For instance, in order to match up defensively in the NFC East, you must play like the Giants or Philadelphia to keep them from dominating you. Certain coaches have a certain style. Everybody gears their personnel a certain way, and I think most has to do with trying to win your division. When I was with New Orleans, we had to have a big running back, George Rogers in this case, to stay with San Francisco and Los Angeles."

Bears scout Geiger appended: "I know our division (NFC Central) is a running one but then you get a Vinny Testaverde in Tampa Bay, then what happens? Now the Bucs like to put the ball up. But before he came along, they ran the hell out of (James) Wilder."

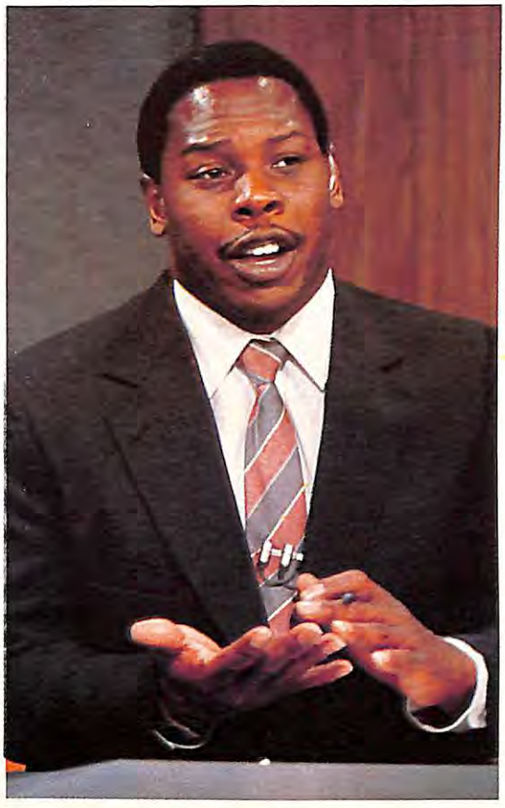
And how about the game's permanent underpinnings, artificial turf and grass? Bush, who played on mod sod in Cincinnati and Seattle before switching to the real stuff in Green Bay last year, points to the NFC's eight grass fields (compared to the AFC's five) to explain the NFC's power/run philosophy.

"Pro football is a much quicker game on AstroTurf, compared to grass. That's why a Fredd Young (Indianapolis linebacker) is so devastating on artificial fields. The AFC has more artificial ones, and its teams probably want people who really thrive on it."

AFC vs. NFC
HOW THEY STACK UP

(1981 through 1989 unless otherwise noted)

	AFC	NFC
SUPER BOWL		
The NFC has won the last six Super Bowls		
Won	1	8
Points	158	302
Avg. Points, Game	17.6	33.6
Avg. Yards Rushing, Game	83.3	171.3
Avg. Yards Passing, Game	188.8	253.0
Avg. Total Offense, Game	272.1	424.3
Touchdowns	27	37
Sacks	21	39
Passes Intercepted By	5	14
REGULAR SEASON		
TOTAL DEFENSE (avg. game)	332.1	323.5
An NFC team has finished No. 1 in total defense every year since '83		
RUSHING DEFENSE (avg. game)	126.2	120.0
An NFC team has finished No. 1 in rush defense every year but 1982		
RUSHING OFFENSE (avg. game)	121.9	124.4
An NFC team has finished No. 1 in rush offense 7 of the past 9 years		
1,000-YARD RUSHERS (1980-89)	42	59
SACKS (1980-89, total)	5,208	5,795
Avg. Sacks Per Team, Season	37.2	41.4
NFC players have led the league in sacks the last 5 seasons		
INTERCEPTIONS (1980-89)	2,774	2,850
NFC has 119 more interceptions in the last 5 years		

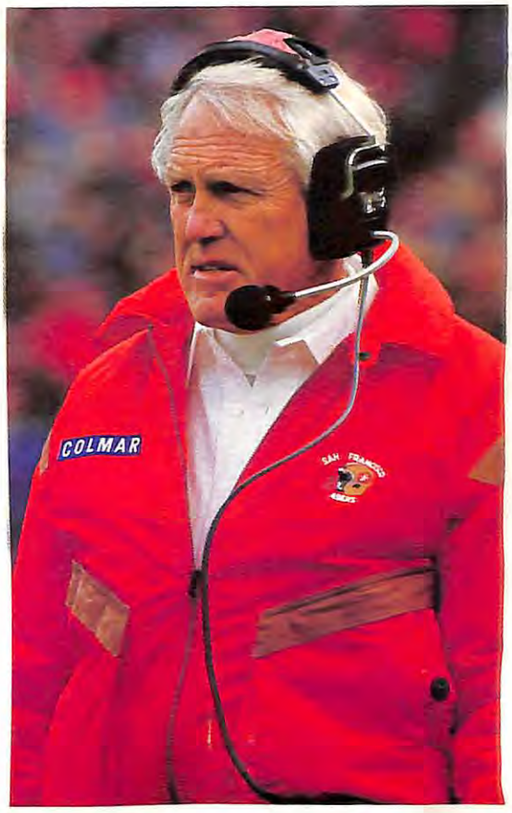


"Eventually, the AFC will come around to do what the NFC is doing to dominate, but the acquisition of that certain physical talent is hard, and it's a lengthy process."

—Tom Jackson
former Denver All-Pro

"There is better management and coaching in the NFC, particularly with specific clubs.... The NFC is more physical, which goes back to better drafting and better development of players, and that all starts with overall organization.... The AFC hasn't developed the strong upper level now in place in the other conference."

—Bill Walsh
former 49ers head coach



NFC POWER vs. AFC FLASH/FINESSE

Grass fields are an underlying reason for the NFC's style of play and a significant difference between the two conferences, according to Jackson, who lasted 14 NFL seasons with Denver. The AFC tries to take advantage of its speedier non-grass surfaces by adopting a finesse-oriented style, featuring more downfield routes and an open style of play.

"The AFC has the great receivers and many great quarterbacks, so the emphasis seems to be on the offensive side of the ball," Jackson said. "Conversely, it seems NFC teams are more hard-nosed or physical."

In the '80s, the NFC power play is reflected in rushing compilations. Its members charged for 5,551 more yards in the last decade on 157 more carries, while the AFC passed for nearly 3,927 more yards on 116 more completions. Of the 100 rushers who ranked in each season's top 10 over the decade, 61 were NFC backs, while 59 of the decade's 101 1,000-yard performances were also by NFC runners.

Similarly, when it comes to top 10 receivers ranked by yardage over the decade, the AFC had a 57-43 edge. But when compiling the same receiver lists based on number of catches, the NFC prevailed, 53-47, a strong indication that NFC teams generally prefer the more balanced, possession strategy, while the AFC opts for bigger, aggressive strikes.

"Everybody thought the good young quarterbacks who came into the AFC in the mid-'80s (Dan Marino, John Elway, Boomer Esiason, Bernie Kosar, Warren Moon, etc.) would make that conference dominant. What has happened is because you have these quarterbacks, you become a passing team," noted Ira Miller, NFL writer with the *San Francisco Chronicle*, several years ago. "You have to build your team around them, and if you're throwing the ball all the time, or a good part of the time, it is much harder to practice defense. That's because you don't hit in those passing drills. You look at Miami, San Diego and others that threw the ball and they did not have good defenses."

Don Heinrich, who coached and played in the NFL and now does television commentary, said the NFC always has had the "hard rock philosophy, similar to college's Big Ten Conference, and approaches football as more of a physical game. While today's NFC is more physical, it's still not Vince Lombardi-style physical, but then nobody has ever done it as tough as Vince did."

In Lombardi's time, football might did make right. And, indeed, NFC statistics in the early '80s showed how physical teams generally had more success than predominantly finesse teams. But today, as evidenced by the NFC's increased passing statistics in the late '80s, and by teams like the San Francisco 49ers and Washington Redskins — the decade's two winningest teams — true "might" is the team which plays intelligent, balanced football. Bill Walsh, Joe Gibbs, Bobby Beathard are three of the astute football minds who have built innovative, sophisticated passing games on the backs of diverse defenses and equally sound abilities to run. They have pointed the way for the rest of the league.

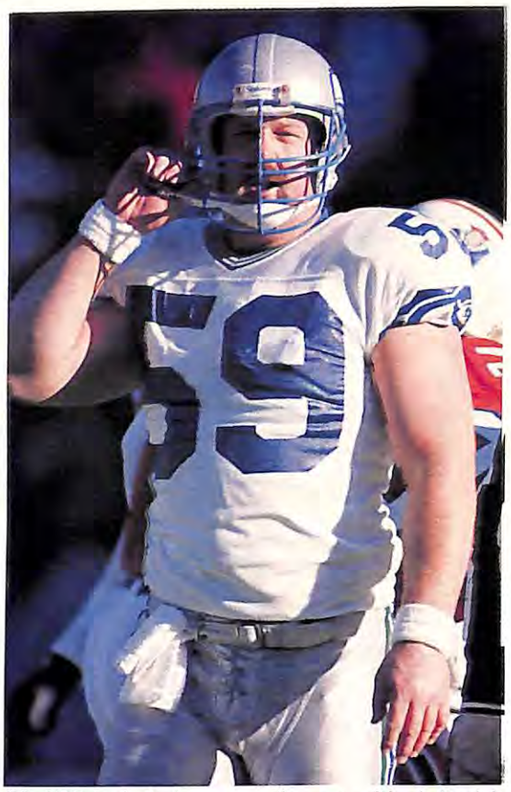
SHREWDER MOVES

Differences transcend playing surfaces, player talent and style of play if you agree with Bill Walsh, who in large part built the present San Francisco dynasty. He credits NFC domination to more effective upper-echelon organizations.

"There is better management and coaching in the NFC, particularly with specific clubs," he said. "I'm thinking of the Washington Redskins, who have solid management and coaching, the New York Giants with their steady situation, the Chicago Bears and certainly the 49ers. You could name names but it's really a top-to-bottom quality with these teams. The organizations have strength all down the line.

"The NFC is more physical, which goes back to better drafting and better development of players, and that all starts with overall organization. While Denver appears the best of the AFC at this point, I don't see any team from that conference getting it done by next season. The AFC hasn't developed the strong upper level now in place in the other conference."

Will McDonough, *Boston Globe* writer and CBS analyst, agreed, and points to Walsh as one of the prime examples. "Walsh did a tremendous job in San Francisco. He had a couple years of scraping around the bottom, then the 49ers started getting good draft choices and built a good team. Chicago did the same thing. You look at their draft in the early '80s and they did a heckuva job building a great nucleus. The NFC has been feeding off that nucleus in the '80s just like Pittsburgh and Oakland and Miami fed off their building programs throughout the '70s.



"The NFC dominates because, on the average, it has better defensive lines," says center Blair Bush (left), who's played in both conferences (Cincinnati, Seattle, Green Bay). Differences cross conference lines, according to Wade Phillips (right), defensive coordinator at Denver. "Everybody gears their personnel a certain way, and I think most has to do with trying to win your division."

"The superior teams which stay up there the longest, like San Francisco and Washington, did the best job in the last 10 years of making moves away from the draft. Like some of the trades (then with the Redskins) Bob Beathard made and some of the free agents he added."

McDonough cites NFC talent which came directly from the old United States Football League. The Redskins went to the USFL for wide receivers Gary Clark and Ricky Sanders, quarterback Doug Williams and running back Kelvin Bryant. Minnesota took wide receiver Anthony Carter, offensive tackle Gary Zimmerman and defensive giant Keith Millard from the same pool. Ditto New Orleans, which plucked kick returner Mel Gray, quarterback Bobby Hebert, running back Buford Jordan, linebackers Sam Mills and Vaughan Johnson and defensive back Antonio Gibson from the USFL.

"Many forget that several of those now running the top NFC teams — George Young of the Giants, Joe Gibbs of the Redskins and Walsh — got their NFL indoctrination through the AFC," added Miller. "The AFC lost many good people to the NFC. Walsh worked with the Raiders, Chargers and Bengals. Gibbs was with the Chargers. Young was with the Colts and Dolphins. Beathard was with the Dolphins. Giants coach Bill Parcells was with the Patriots. They helped build the teams that have won recent Super Bowls."

Heinrich speculates that the NFC's dominance this decade was bolstered by "stability in ownership and high management. Look at the Giants and the Bears, who have always had pretty much the same faces on top. That's certainly the case in San Francisco where Walsh put together the team. Add a Mike Ditka at Chicago, if you want somebody strong in management."

IF YOU CAN'T BEAT 'EM, JOIN 'EM

Relative strength, even dominance, generally will succumb to the inevitable cycles, particularly in a sport so heavily conceived in parity, with the meek routinely inheriting better draft choices and less rigorous schedules. And don't think all AFC clubs, while losing ground to the NFC, have not been taking notes. In the last three seasons, for example, the underdog conference has outrushed the NFC, which over the same period of time has outpassed the AFC. One sees the AFC plotting new paths to the Super Bowl.

Kansas City appears to be one such team on the climb. Last year under Marty Schottenheimer, the Chiefs relied on the thundering charges of Christian Okoye plus a solid defense which finished second to Minnesota in fewest yards allowed. San Diego is another AFC team that could be coming on, especially with new general manager (formerly with the NFC) Beathard calling the shots. San Diego has an underrated defensive unit, including a line led by Lee Williams, Leslie O'Neal and Burt Grossman, and a running attack built around power blasters Marion Butts and Tim Spencer.

But keep an eye on the Steelers, who have some of the same ingredients *and* a talented quarterback. "I like Pittsburgh's style of play," Jackson admitted. "The Steelers use that trap blocking. I like their running back combo of Tim Worley and Merril Hoge, and their offensive line. And when Bubby Brister sees someone open deep, he'll get the ball to him. Pittsburgh also has a defense that likes to get after people. Eventually, the AFC will come around to do what the NFC is doing to dominate, but the acquisition of that certain physical talent is hard, and it's a lengthy process."

The Steelers' Rooney recognizes the NFC's dominance based on Super Bowl results, but harks to the NFL's built-in gyroscope. "It's proof that our system works, the 'Pete's Parity' programs — the draft and waiver systems — that (former commissioner) Pete Rozelle kept pushing in the '70s. I was critical of it at the time, but these did bring about balance. That's also why I'm concerned about present threats to such balance, like Plan B and the talk about complete free agency."

Raiders executive LoCasale represents the only club to appear in Super Bowls in the '60s, '70s and '80s. "If I could explain it (NFC dominance), I could also explain why the Raiders have a 27-6-1 record on *Monday Night Football*, with only 12 of those games at home and the teams selected so the games should match equal or more competitive opponents."

Paul Brown, Cincinnati's veteran general manager and a learned pro football pioneer, recalled a late '70s Pro Bowl gathering of league management leaders. "At that time, Tex Schramm of the Dallas Cowboys was in a lather because the AFC was dominating everything," he said. "It really upset Tex, who was yelling the NFC must win this Pro Bowl to stop that trend."

Schramm is no longer an NFL executive. But he must be smiling.

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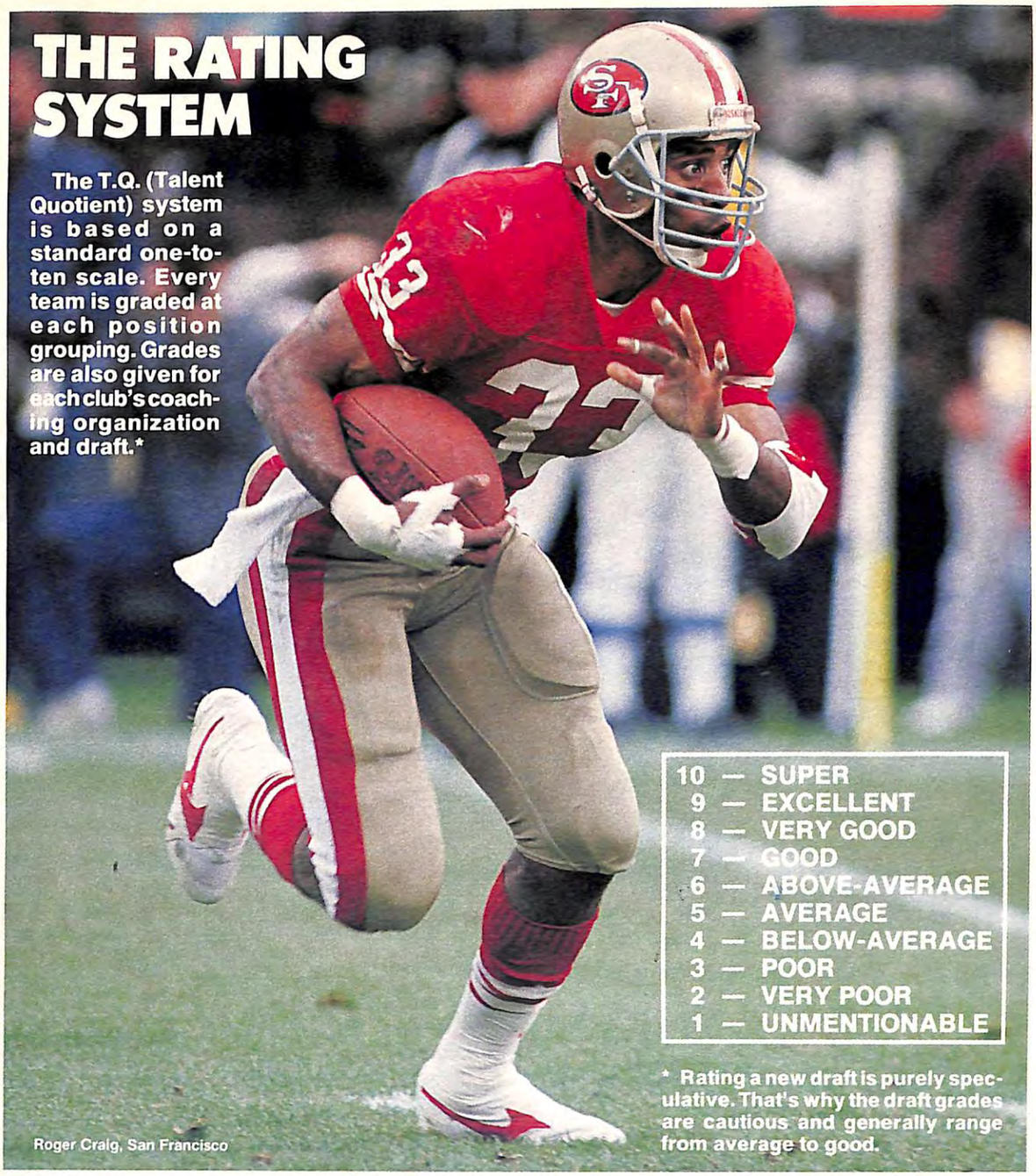
THE RATING SYSTEM

The T.Q. (Talent Quotient) system is based on a standard one-to-ten scale. Every team is graded at each position grouping. Grades are also given for each club's coaching organization and draft.*



Roger Craig, San Francisco

10	SUPER
9	EXCELLENT
8	VERY GOOD
7	GOOD
6	ABOVE-AVERAGE
5	AVERAGE
4	BELOW-AVERAGE
3	POOR
2	VERY POOR
1	UNMENTIONABLE

* Rating a new draft is purely speculative. That's why the draft grades are cautious and generally range from average to good.

THE FINAL T.Q. GRADE

The final T.Q. is based solely on the physical abilities and past histories of each club. It precludes factors such as emotion and momentum.

70.0 and over	Super Bowl Quality Team; Exceptionally Strong and Balanced
65.0 to 69.5	Definite Playoff Contender with the Talent To Reach the Super Bowl
60.0 to 64.5	Solid Club with Playoff Possibilities but Only a Slim Super Bowl Chance
55.0 to 59.5	A Playoff Longshot with Too Many Holes To Seriously Threaten the Big Boys
54.5 and under	A Rebuilding Project with Middle-of-the-Pack Objectives

FINAL T.Q.s

AFC

EAST

Miami	65.5
Buffalo	60.5
Indianapolis	60.5
NY Jets	56.0
New England	55.0

CENTRAL

Cincinnati	66.0
Houston	65.5
Pittsburgh	64.0
Cleveland	63.5

WEST

Kansas City	67.5
Denver	67.0
LA Raiders	63.5
San Diego	56.5
Seattle	55.5

NFC

EAST

NY Giants	66.0
Philadelphia	64.0
Washington	63.5
Phoenix	52.5
Dallas	50.0

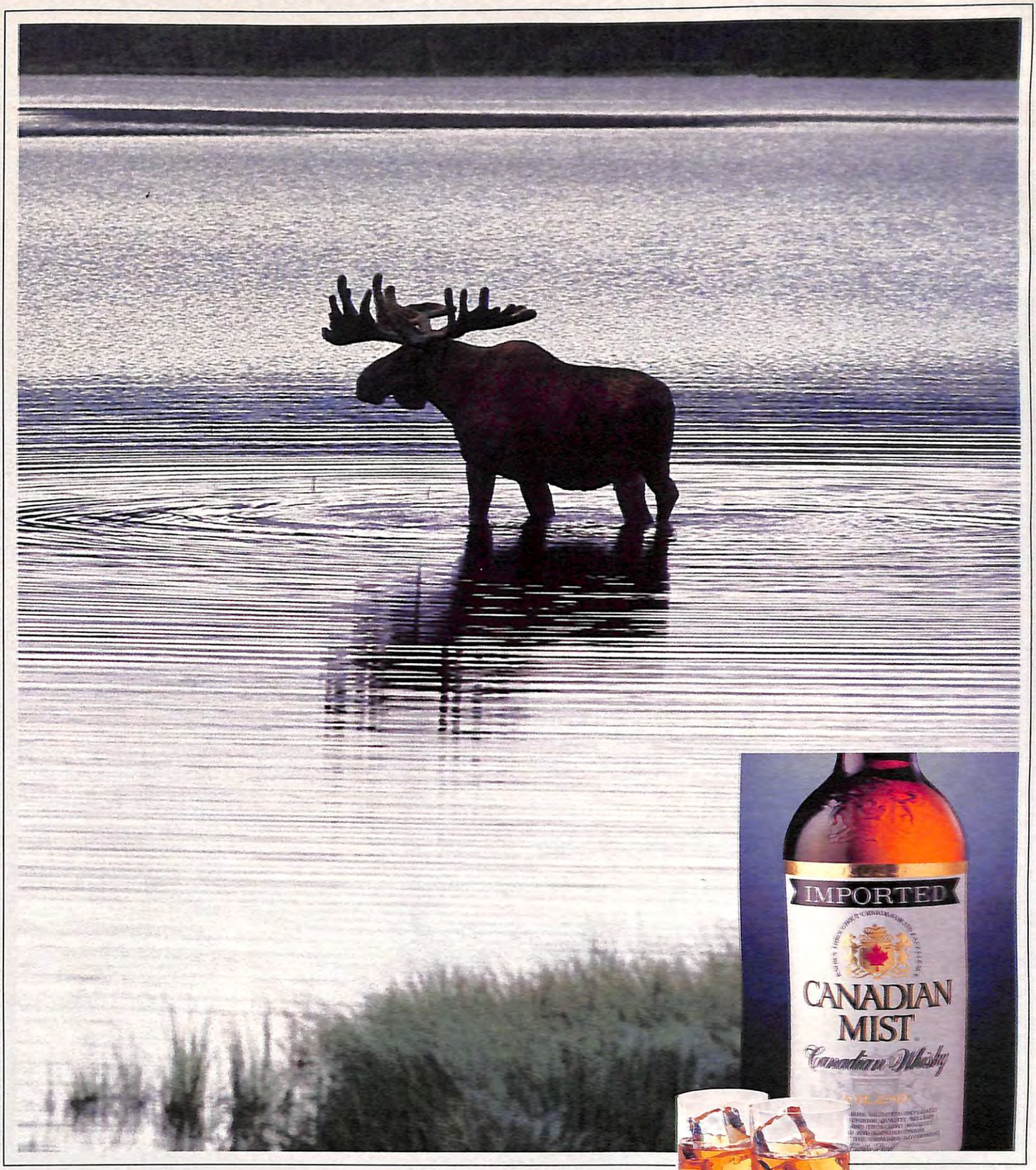
CENTRAL

Minnesota	65.0
Chicago	61.0
Detroit	60.0
Green Bay	60.0
Tampa Bay	55.0

WEST

San Francisco	70.5
LA Rams	63.0
New Orleans	59.0
Atlanta	55.0

CANADA AT ITS BEST



Now and then, a fine spirit can evoke the very essence of the land that produced it. So it is with Canadian Mist, America's number one Canadian. Pleasingly mellow. Yet clean, honest, and true. Like Canada itself. When it's at its best.

LIGHT, SMOOTH, MELLOW

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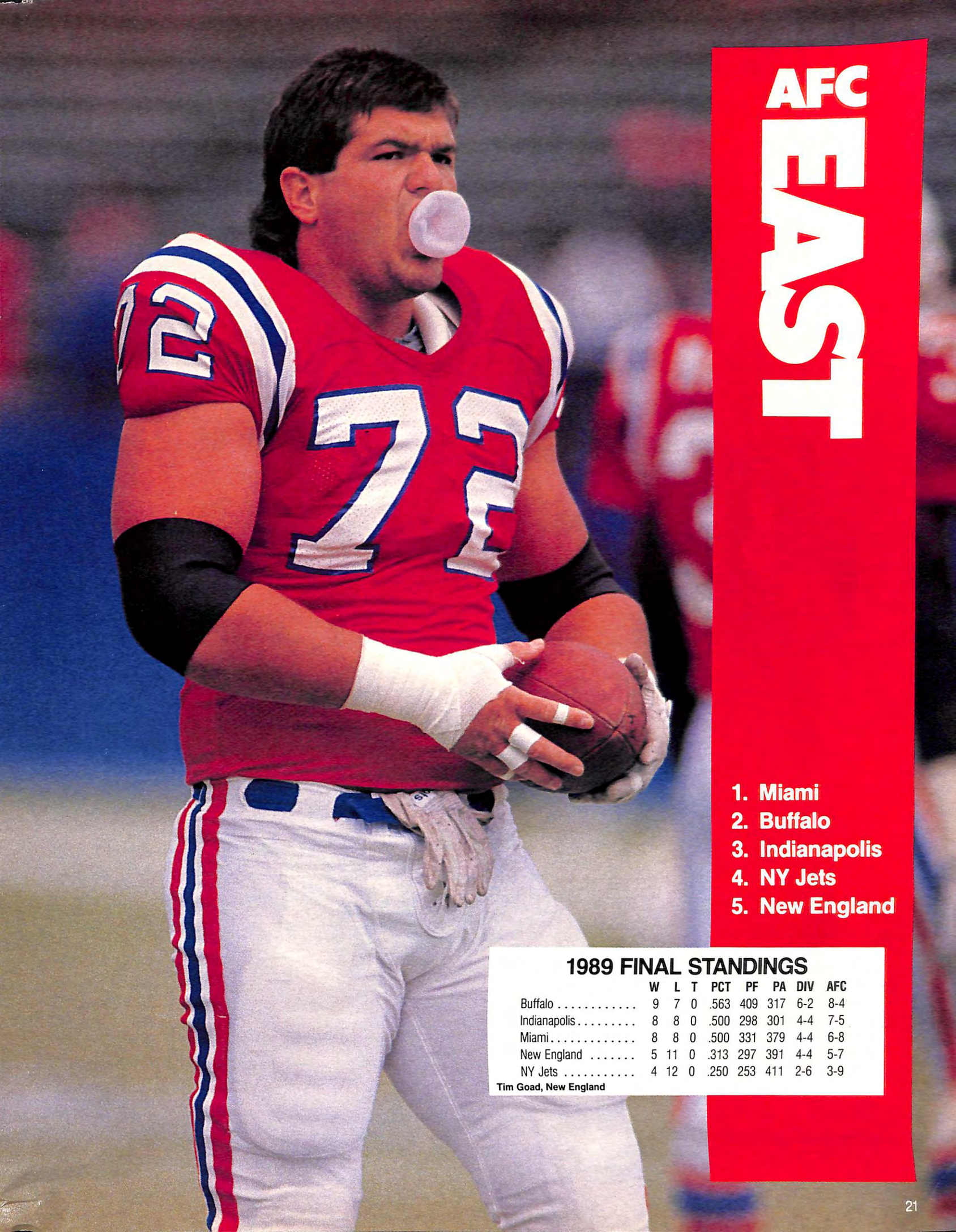


AFC EAST

1. Miami
2. Buffalo
3. Indianapolis
4. NY Jets
5. New England

1989 FINAL STANDINGS

	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA	DIV	AFC
Buffalo	9	7	0	.563	409	317	6-2	8-4
Indianapolis	8	8	0	.500	298	301	4-4	7-5
Miami	8	8	0	.500	331	379	4-4	6-8
New England	5	11	0	.313	297	391	4-4	5-7
NY Jets	4	12	0	.250	253	411	2-6	3-9

Tim Goad, New England

MIAMI DOLPHINS

1989 RECORD: 8-8 HEAD COACH: DON SHULA STADIUM: JOE ROBBIE (73,000)

Although their 8-8 finish wasn't good enough for playoff qualification, the Dolphins became reacquainted with the feeling of success in 1989. And that, alone, could go a long way toward enabling them to be an even stronger factor in the division this year.

Last season, the Dolphins were alive and kicking down the stretch, before squandering a chance to make the post-season tournament by losing four of their last five games. Coach Don Shula, whose career mark is 285-132-6, was disappointed about the late-season collapse. But he was far more encouraged by the effort and desire of his players in the 27-24 season-ending loss to Kansas City than what he witnessed in the 40-24 season-ending defeat to Pittsburgh in 1988.

During the offseason, quarterback Dan Marino expressed discontent with playing for the Dolphins and talked about wanting to be traded. Some are dismissing the whole matter as a ploy by Marino to have his $1.5-million-per-year salary boosted to the upper-$2-to-$3-million range. Nevertheless, it has to be unsettling, especially since one reason cited for Marino's desire to leave is an inability to get along with Shula. This isn't the first time Marino's happiness with the coach has been in doubt.

WIDE RECEIVERS/ TIGHT END

Mark Clayton didn't catch as many passes in 1989 (64) as he did in 1988 (86), but still had a strong season. Besides leading the Dolphins in receptions, he also was tops in receiving yards (1,011, an average of 15.8 per catch), touchdown catches (9, tying him for second in the AFC) and touchdowns. Clayton plays much larger and stronger than his 5-9, 184-pound frame might suggest. Most of his patterns are inside, and he has the courage to run in traffic. Clayton's adept at finding openings in zones, and darting in and out of those openings. Ultra-quick, he continues to be almost impossible to cover man-to-man. At 29 and entering his eighth season, Clayton's only enemy could be age.

Mark Duper struggled at the other receiver spot last year, just as he did in the previous two seasons. Although part of his problem in 1989 was missing preseason practice time because of a contractual holdout, he no longer seems to have the great raw speed he once displayed. Duper still has the ability to make acrobatic catches; his hands, like Clayton's, are first-rate. But he doesn't run with the ball as effectively as in previous years. On many receptions last season, he immediately hit the ground.

The Dolphins remain high on Fred Banks, and might very well move him ahead of Duper on the depth chart. When one compares sheer ability, Duper gets the edge. But Banks seems to be taking giant steps forward. His instincts are excellent, and he is able to get deep as quickly as Clayton and Duper in their primes. Banks' weakness is his hands, but they are steadily improving.

Versatile Jim Jensen, who caught a career-high 61 passes for 557 yards and six TDs last season, is still one of the better third-down receivers in the NFL. At 6-4, 220, he is big and strong enough to "post up" a defender, plus he has the feel to find the creases in a zone. He may have the surest hands on the team.

As a rookie free agent in 1989, Andre Brown made a strong impression, catching 24 passes for 410 yards and five touchdowns. Though he's shy some speed (4.7), he's a big (6-3, 210) receiver with good body control and soft hands. The coaches were particularly impressed with his two Big Ben receptions for TDs last season, and hope to use him more extensively as a third or fourth receiver.

Third-year tight end Ferrell Edmunds went to the Pro Bowl last year, an honor he deserved. The prototype for his position, he has a rare combination of size (6-6, 252), speed and athletic ability. He's quick into his patterns and a reliable target. Besides the ability to run away from defenders, Edmunds is a load to bring down. As a blocker, he makes strong initial contact, but must improve his sustain.

GRADE (max. 10): **7.5**

OFFENSIVE LINE

Despite 601 pass attempts, the Dolphins allowed an NFL-low 10 sacks last season. They also set records for consecutive seasons leading the league in fewest sacks (eight) and number of times doing so overall (nine). However, the statistics are deceptive, because of Dan Marino's incredible knack for releasing the ball quickly.

Tackle is the Dolphins' soft spot on the line, and they addressed the problem with their first two picks in the recent draft. Last year's starters, Jeff Dellenbach on the left side and the tandem of Mark Dennis and Ronnie Lee on the right, are all listed in the dictionary under "journeyman."

Dellenbach is a street fighter with athletic limitations. A solid pass protector, he compensates for slow feet with long arms and sound technique. He does what he has to do to keep his big body between the rusher and his quarterback. Dellenbach isn't an explosive drive blocker, but there is no quit in him. Dennis has excellent size (6-6, 290) and better movement than Dellenbach, but he has yet to distinguish himself. Lee was lost to Atlanta as a Plan B free agent.

Left guard Roy Foster regained his Pro Bowl form last season after struggling two years ago. A deluxe athlete with speed and agility, Foster excels on the move and in pass protection. His in-line run blocking is less noteworthy.

Right guard Harry Galbreath, a squatty 6-1, is an aggressive dynamo. His insertion into the line last year actually changed the personality of the unit from one that caught the rushers to one that attacked. Although Galbreath can't strike on the run like Foster, he has good strength and some pop in tight. His pass protection — abetted by good feet and balance — is excellent. Taller bull rushers, however, can create leverage problems at times.

Jeff Uhlenhake, a rookie from Ohio State, took over at center last season and played as if he plans to stay for a decade or so. He had some of his more impressive moments late in the year as he gained experience. Already a proficient pass blocker, Uhlenhake is a fine athlete who moves well laterally, is always in balance and adjusts fairly well to counter moves. As a run blocker, he has the requisite size (6-3, 280) but needs additional muscle to win his share of one-on-one battles against the powerhouse nose tackles.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.0**

QUARTERBACK

Marino's unhappiness was a major concern in the offseason. The Dolphins — adopting a more aggressive attitude with Tim Robbie taking over as team president following the death of his father, Joe — were hoping to change his outlook by renegotiating his contract. They don't need to be reminded he is the best and most important player on the team, and they can't win without him.

But Marino, whose relationship with Shula is said to be deteriorating, has experienced a decline in his quarterback rating since 1986, when it stood at 92.5. It fell to 89.2 in 1987, 80.8 in '88 and 76.9 last year. Some observers think he has been rushing his passes. Others believe his receivers aren't getting open as quickly as they once did.

Nevertheless, Marino led the AFC last season in passing attempts (550), completions (308), yards (3,997) and interceptions (22), while he was third in touchdown passes (24). He played with more enthusiasm last year because the Dolphins remained in the playoff hunt until late in the season.

Marino can cock and fire with anybody who's ever played. In fact, nobody has ever delivered the ball to a receiver any quicker. If you're looking for flaws, there's really only one: He's no threat running the ball.

Ferrell Edmunds

Third-year backup Scott Secules has potential. However, with Marino having started 92 of the Dolphins' last 94 regular season games, there hasn't been much opportunity for him to develop his passing skills. Secules does have a strong arm and a great deal of intelligence.

GRADE (max. 10): **8.5**

RUNNING BACKS

Sammie Smith, the first of the Dolphins' two first-round draft picks last year, had a decent rookie season, rushing for 659 yards and averaging 3.3 per carry. But it wasn't until late in the year that he began to have a significant impact. A holdout, which caused him to miss all of training camp, slowed his progress.

Smith is a pure running talent, with speed, quickness, moves and power. Tentative at first, he started to come on when he began slamming up into the hole. Smith does have a tendency to fumble, which seems to result from a lack of concentration, and he wasn't that helpful on passing downs because he runs poor pass patterns. Considering he came from a pass-oriented program at Florida State, that was a disappointment.

Troy Stradford played in the first seven games last season before suffering a season-ending knee injury that required reconstructive surgery. If fully recovered, he's a first-rate, third-down back and a nice change of pace to Smith. The lightning-quick Stradford can flash upfield and runs bigger than 5-9, 192. His hands and patterns are pluses.

The Dolphins are in dire need of help at fullback. Marc Logan, who was injured for parts of last year, is a strong inside runner and good blocker, but gets by more on hard

work than talent. Tony Paige, a Plan B free-agent acquisition, is an excellent blocker but not much of a runner.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.5**

DEFENSIVE LINE The Dolphins made a significant improvement in their sack total, going from 24 in 1988 to 39 last season. The biggest reason was the emergence of right end Jeff Cross. His team-high 10 sacks were the most by a Dolphin since Doug Betters registered 14 in 1984.

Cross, a ninth-round draft choice two years ago, is a relentless rusher who counts good wheels as his prime asset. He comes off the snap hard, but isn't particularly explosive. Against the run, he likes to rumble but lacks top strength. Teams run right at him with success.

Nose tackle Brian Sochia has pretty good movement

Jarvis Williams

and toughness, but has developed a reputation as an up-and-down performer. Extremely active, he makes plays down the line and can get after the quarterback. However, he doesn't have the ballast to consistently hold up against the double-team and keep the blockers off the linebackers. Still, he's a guy you want to go to war with.

Left end T.J. Turner is a bull-strong run stuffer. He does a good job of controlling blockers and holding his ground. However, Turner is more wrestler than penetrator. His limited rush skills relegate him to the bench on passing downs.

Depth could be a problem if end John Bosa can't come all the way back from a knee injury he suffered two years ago. Bosa was very impressive as a rookie in 1987, exhibiting the kind of upfield quickness and killer instinct that Cross possesses. The Dolphins still like Eric Kumerow as a pass-rushing specialist, even though, with just two sacks last year, he has not been close to being a major force. He runs well, but is stiff and not particularly intense. The coaches have talked about using him as an outside linebacker, as well as an end, but probably will keep him down.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.5**

LINEBACKERS This time, the Dolphins' decision-makers didn't drag their feet in offseason contract negotiations with inside linebacker John Offerdahl. They got him signed to a new deal, and that should put him in an excellent frame of mind once the season begins. A contract squabble caused him to miss the first six games of the 1989 season before he signed a one-year deal.

Without Offerdahl, the Dolphins' defense isn't the same. One of the premier players at his position, Offerdahl is an attack-style player who goes all-out on every snap. He attempts to make every single tackle, and is angry when he doesn't wind up on top of the ballcarrier. Offerdahl only has average speed, but plays faster because of his intensity. That pace also has resulted in his suffering more than his share of injuries.

The Dolphins managed to get an excellent year out of their other inside starter, 12-year veteran Barry Krauss, after acquiring him off waivers from Cleveland. Starting in the final 12 games of the season, Krauss led the team in tackles with 119, but age is catching up with him and he slowed down toward the end of the 1989 season. Strength and smarts are Krauss' major assets. He reads quickly, sheds blocks efficiently and shuts down the inside running game.

Despite his strong performance, Krauss is likely to be replaced by muscular Cliff Odom, a scrappy Plan B signee from the Indianapolis Colts. As with Krauss, Odom's strength is filling the interior cracks. But he is 32 years old and has taken quite a pounding. The Dolphins will be fortunate to get one good season out of him, which was the same approach they took with Krauss.

Rick Graf began last season as the No. 1 left outside linebacker and played pretty well until a thumb injury sidelined him for the rest of the season. At 6-5, 249, he runs well and is a factor at the point of attack. There are some who believe he'd be better off at defensive end. His toughness also has been questioned.

E.J. Junior, who took over on the strong outside when Graf went down, appeared revitalized with the Dolphins. His intensity was up and so was his level of play. An outstanding athlete who fell short of expectations with the Cardinals, Junior can take on blockers, drop fluidly into coverages and even shadow backs. At age 30, he may have sorted it out.

Hugh Green, once regarded as the prototype blitz/cover linebacker, had a productive 1989 season, notching 7½ sacks and making big plays in pursuit. But Green is no longer a dominant defender. Age and injuries have defused his explosiveness and cut into his great speed. What's left is a diamond without the brilliance.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.5**

DEFENSIVE BACKS The Dolphins have the best young safety tandem in the league in Louis Oliver and Jarvis Williams.

Oliver, the second of Miami's two first-round choices in 1989, made a big impact at free safety. He led the team with four interceptions, and his bone-crunching hits made him an intimidating presence in the Dolphins secondary. Oliver, at this stage, is far better in run support than pass coverage. He tends to bite on play-action and experienced quarterbacks can look him off. However, Oliver can run with any free safety in the league, which eventually will translate into outstanding range. When isolated man-on-man, he has some trouble maneuvering his 6-2, 225-pound body to stick with quick, nifty receivers.

Third-year man Williams, Oliver's former teammate at Florida, started at strong safety for the first time last year after moving from free safety. He adjusted neatly. He, too, is a good hitter and better at run defense than pass coverage. As strong safeties go, however, he covers extremely well. Williams can hang with the fastest tight ends and reacts quickly to the ball in the zone.

The Dolphins have a serious deficiency at cornerback, which is why they took a risk in acquiring Tim McKyer and his questionable attitude from San Francisco for a pair of draft picks. McKyer's ultra-tight, man-to-man coverage skills are state-of-the-art. He has a fluid backpedal, turn-and-go agility and excellent recovery speed. His personality hasn't been as wonderful.

Cornerback Paul Lankford, going into his ninth season, has problems with man-to-man coverage. A smooth, long-legged athlete, he isn't as nifty as you'd like, plus he lacks catch-up speed. His run support is still solid. The Dolphins are optimistic that cornerback Rodney Thomas, a promising third-year man, will continue to develop. As opposed to Lankford, he is a good man-on-man cover guy. He has quick feet, can accelerate on the break, and has excellent catch-up speed. He'll also hang in OK against the sweep.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.0**

SPECIAL TEAMS Although Reggie Roby has long been regarded as one of the better punters in the NFL, he's had one significant flaw — his inability to consistently put the ball inside the opponents' 20-yard line. Roby seemed to correct that last year by putting 18 punts in that zone. Pete Stoyanovich, a rookie last season, finished sixth in the AFC in scoring among kickers with 95 points. It was the third-highest total for a rookie in Dolphin history, behind the 116 of Fuad Reveiz in 1985 and 99 of Uwe von Schamann in 1979.

Despite missing six games with a knee injury, Marc Logan ranked second in the AFC in kickoff returns with a 25.5-yard average. Scott Schwedes (11.7) remains an effective punt returner. The coverage teams were nothing to write home about.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.5**

COACHING/ORGANIZATION Shortly after the 1989 season, Shula signed a three-year contract. The message is clear: He is going to see the Dolphins back into the playoffs. The team showed promise last season, rebounding from a 1-3 start. Considering the team's overall lack of talent, Shula's coaching job last season was nothing short of miraculous.

With Tim Robbie in charge, the Dolphins are likely to take a more liberal approach to contract negotiations and spend what it takes to return to playoff contention. Shula's word carries much more weight with the younger Robbie.

GRADE (max. 10): **8.0**

DRAFT This may prove to be one of the Dolphins' better drafts. They firmly addressed a desperate need right off the bat with the selections of Webb and Sims; both are likely to start on the offensive line. They picked up a solid player in Oglesby, who should add some badly needed depth to the defensive line. Fourth-rounder Mitchell is a big, strong-armed quarterback prospect, and fullback Holt has the ability to be an immediate starter.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.5**

1990 DRAFT round number (pick in round; overall sequence): 1. (11,9) RICHMOND WEBB, OT, Texas A&M; 2. (14,39) KEITH SIMS, OG, Iowa State; 3. (13,66) ALFRED OGLESBY, DT, Houston; 4. (12,93) SCOTT MITCHELL, QB, Utah; 5. (28,137) LEROY HOLT, RB, Southern California; 6 (14,151) SEAN VANHORSE, DB, Howard; 8. (12,205) THOMAS WOODS, WR, Tennessee; 9. (11,231) PHIL ROSS, TE, Oregon State; 12. (12,315) BOBBY HARDEN, DB, Miami.

T.Q.©65.5

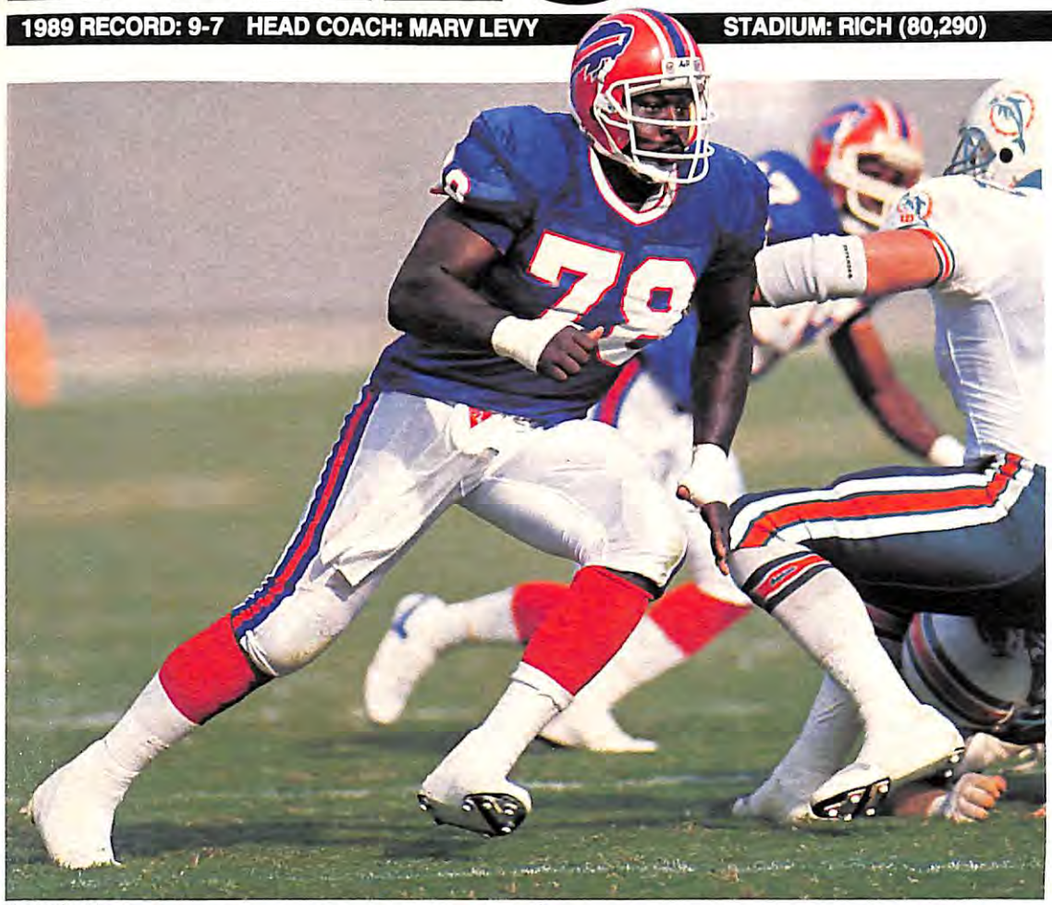
VETERANS ROSTER

NO.	NAME	POS.	HT.	WT.	BIRTH-DATE	COLLEGE	NFL EXP.
86	Banks, F.	WR	5-10	180	5/26/62	Liberty	5
97	Bosa, J.	DE	6-4	270	1/10/64	Boston College	4
82	Brown, A.	WR	6-3	210	8/21/66	Miami (Fla.)	2
83	Clayton, M.	WR	5-9	184	4/8/61	Louisville	8
91	Cross, J.	DE	6-4	270	3/25/66	Missouri	3
65	Dellenbach, J.	T-C	6-6	282	2/14/63	Wisconsin	6
74	Dennis, M.	T	6-6	290	4/15/65	Illinois	4
85	Duper, M.	WR	5-9	190	1/25/59	Northwestern St. (La.)	9
80	Edmunds, F.	TE	6-6	252	4/16/65	Maryland	3
	*Elder, D.	CB	5-9	175	12/13/63	Memphis State	5
61	Foster, R.	G	6-4	277	5/24/60	Southern Cal	9
62	Galbreath, H.	G-C	6-1	275	1/1/65	Tennessee	3
35	*Glenn, K.	CB	5-9	175	1/3/62	Minnesota	4
99	Graf, R.	LB	6-5	249	8/29/63	Wisconsin	4
55	Green, H.	LB	6-2	228	7/27/59	Pittsburgh	10
92	Griggs, D.	LB	6-3	239	2/5/67	Virginia	2
	*Harvey, S.	LB	6-4	245	3/8/65	Arizona State	2
21	*Higgs, M.	RB	5-7	188	4/11/66	Kentucky	3
40	Highsmith, F.	RB	6-2	220	12/7/62	Miami (Fla.)	1
29	Hobley, L.	S	6-0	202	5/12/62	LSU	5
11	Jensen, J.	WR-RB	6-4	224	11/14/58	Boston University	10
54	Junior, E.J.	LB	6-3	242	12/8/59	Alabama	10
88	Kinchen, B.	TE	6-2	232	8/6/65	LSU	3
58	Krauss, B.	LB	6-3	260	3/17/57	Alabama	12
90	Kumerow, E.	DE	6-7	268	4/17/65	Ohio State	3
44	Lankford, P.	CB	6-1	190	6/15/58	Penn State	9
20	Logan, M.	FB	5-11	220	5/9/65	Kentucky	4
13	Marino, D.	QB	6-4	224	9/15/61	Pittsburgh	8
	McKyer, T.	CB	6-0	174	9/5/63	Texas-Arlington	4
27	*Moore, S.	CB	5-11	205	2/9/67	Mississippi	1
93	*Odom, C.	LB	6-2	251	8/15/58	Texas-Arlington	10
56	Offerdahl, J.	LB	6-3	240	8/17/64	Western Michigan	5
25	Oliver, L.	S	6-2	226	3/9/66	Florida	2
49	*Paige, T.	FB	5-10	235	10/14/62	Virginia Tech	7
52	*Reichenbach, M.	LB	6-2	235	9/14/61	East Stroudsburg	7
4	Roby, R.	P	6-2	246	7/30/61	Iowa	8
81	Schwedes, S.	WR	6-0	182	6/30/65	Syracuse	4
9	Secules, S.	QB	6-3	219	11/8/64	Virginia	3
33	Smith, S.	RB	6-2	226	5/16/67	Florida State	2
70	Sochia, B.	NT	6-3	278	7/21/61	NW Oklahoma St.	8
18	Stoudt, C.	QB	6-4	218	3/27/55	Youngstown State	12
10	Stoyanovich, P.	K	5-10	180	4/28/67	Indiana	2
23	Stradford, T.	RB	5-9	192	9/11/64	Boston College	4
24	Thomas, R.	CB	5-10	190	12/21/65	Brigham Young	3
95	Turner, T.J.	DE	6-4	280	5/16/63	Houston	5
63	Uhlenhake, J.	C	6-3	282	1/28/66	Ohio State	2
60	Weidner, B.	C	6-3	282	1/20/66	Kent State	1
26	Williams, J.	S	5-11	198	5/16/65	Florida	3
	*Wilson, K.	DE	6-4	275	3/10/64	LSU	4
79	Zdelar, J.	T	6-5	290	5/24/66	Youngstown State	1

*Plan B free agent

BUFFALO BILLS

1989 RECORD: 9-7 HEAD COACH: MARV LEVY STADIUM: RICH (80,290)



Bruce Smith

Bickering. Bumbling.

The Bills fit many descriptions in 1989, but dull wasn't one of them.

They began the season by pulling together for a dramatic, last-second win over the Miami Dolphins. However, as the year progressed, they pulled themselves apart with an assortment of internal problems involving players and coaches. And the season ended with a pair of mistakes — a touchdown pass Ronnie Harmon dropped in the final 14 seconds of a divisional-round playoff game against Cleveland, and an interception quarterback Jim Kelly threw one play later.

Kelly and running back Thurman Thomas were at the center of the public bickering among players that overshadowed the team winning its second consecutive AFC East title. Two assistants, offensive line coach Tom Bresnahan and receivers' boss Nick Nicolau, even got into a fistfight while watching a game tape.

The Bills' offense improved dramatically over 1988, but their defense wasn't nearly as consistent as the unit that led the AFC two years ago.

WIDE RECEIVERS/ TIGHT END

Andre Reed's attitude is as tough as his playing style. After setting a Bills record with 71 receptions in 1988, he boldly predicted before last season he would catch between 80 and 85 passes. Reed finished with 88, second in the NFL behind the 90 of Green Bay's Sterling Sharpe. He tacked up 1,312 receiving yards and nine touchdowns.

The best receiver in the NFL nobody knows about, Reed is as strong as any player at his position. He excels in traffic and makes things happen after the reception. Though he isn't a burner, Reed has deceptive speed and a burst out of his cuts. As with all top receivers, he is totally in sync with his quarterback.

After Reed, there is a big dropoff in the Bills' receiving corps. James Lofton, the third of three starters at the position after signing as a free agent early in the 1989 season, will return for his 13th year in the NFL. Despite his age (34), he still can put pressure on a defense because of his good speed. But the extra gear that made him one of the game's great deep threats isn't there anymore, and he isn't as consistent catching the ball in his NFL twilight. Kelly's confidence in Lofton is obviously limited, considering how seldom he went to him last year. Lofton had only eight receptions in 12 games. Three, however, were for scores.

As a rookie last year from tiny Chadron (Neb.) State, Don Beebe opened some eyes with his tremendous speed and home run capability in the third-receiver slot. He had two TD receptions, each for 63 yards, among his 17 grabs. But he needs to develop a better feel for coverages if he has any hope of unseating Lofton before this season ends. Beebe is a fearless player, although much of that might have to do with his naiveté.

Tight end Pete Metzelaars is a blocker first and foremost. A big, physical "third tackle," he can knock a linebacker off the line and make his presence felt in the running game. He's a limited receiver, though. Neither quick nor fast, Metzelaars will get downfield 8 to 10 yards, lean on a linebacker, push him off and make an occasional possession grab. Don't expect much more.

Keith McKeller is the only legitimate receiving threat among the Bills' tight ends. A 6-4, 245-pound former college basketball player, he's a flexible athlete who runs well and adjusts nicely to the ball. McKeller doesn't figure to make a move on the No. 1 spot, however, until he upgrades his blocking.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.5**

OFFENSIVE LINE

Tom Bresnahan, who became the Bills' new offensive line coach last year, replaced the finesse-oriented approach of his predecessor, Jim Ringo, with a straight-ahead scheme that stresses power. The Bills no longer try to manufacture creases with pulling and trapping; they simply try to blow the opposition off the ball.

Will Wolford, one of the NFL's better left tackles, is the Bills' most consistent offensive lineman. Light on his feet, the 6-5, 290-pound Wolford excels in pass protection. He lacks the explosion to dominate as a run blocker, but is strong and sustains well. Because he wasn't shuffled around the line last year, Wolford was able to settle in and take his game up a notch.

Entering his 11th season, left guard Jim Ritcher remains the best athlete on the line. He runs well, has fast feet and excellent body control. A pumped-up 270 pounds, Ritcher operates best when uncovered. He's a skilled pass blocker, yet can be overpowered at times by a bull rush.

Center Kent Hull, who has earned two Pro Bowl trips since joining the Bills from the USFL in 1986, held up well despite a knee injury that bothered him through the final half of last season. He is extremely intelligent and is the glue that holds the line together. A powerhouse straight-ahead, Hull can pancake most anyone lined up over him. In pass protection, he occasionally gets beat by quickness. However, he uses his arms and hands well, can't be overpowered, and does a good job picking up stunts and blitzes.

Right guard is open now that Joe Devlin has likely been nudged into retirement. Leonard Burton is the No. 1 candidate to take over, but will be challenged by Derrell Marshall, who spent the 1989 season on the developmental squad, and John Davis, who joined the Bills last year as a Plan B free agent from Houston. Burton, a backup center last season, is an outstanding athlete with quickness and strength. But he does have a major drawback — the lack of a killer instinct.

Right tackle Howard Ballard struggled early as a first-year starter, but improved as the season progressed. He was especially effective down the stretch. Big as a condominium (6-6, 315), Ballard can engulf defenders straight-ahead. Plus he has a lot of fight in him. To raise his run blocking to the next level, he needs to work on maintaining his balance and improve his strength. Ballard isn't a natural, quick-footed pass blocker, but on the right side he's usually covered by a tight end. And at his size, it's an expedition to get around him.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.0**

QUARTERBACK

Jim Kelly was a one-man show through the first four weeks of last season. His improvisations from the shotgun formation overcame lifeless game plans and sparked a 119-point explosion in the Bills' 3-1 start.

In Week 5, during a loss to Indianapolis, Kelly suffered a separated left (non-throwing) shoulder that sidelined him for three games. But the real pain from the play didn't come until a day later, when Kelly publicly criticized Ballard for allowing Colts defensive end Jon Hand to break free and drive his left shoulder into the artificial turf. The controversy fueled the internal problems that bothered the Bills for the rest of the year and raised questions about Kelly's leadership ability.

Despite missing three games, Kelly finished 1989 with 25 touchdown passes, 10 more than his 16-game total two years ago. His numbers could have been even more impressive had he not experienced the worst slump of his *NFL*

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career between Weeks 13 and 15 (53-100 for 620 yards, 7 interceptions, 3 touchdowns).

Physically, Kelly has the stuff to take the Bills to the Super Bowl. He's a tough guy who can throw all the passes. And last year he seemed to make better decisions with the ball than in any previous season as a Bill. On occasion, he still will try to force the ball, though.

Frank Reich's stock climbed dramatically in '89. He went from barely keeping the No. 2 job after training camp to proving himself as a capable starter in Kelly's absence. He was 3-0 as a starting pitcher. Reich is a heady quarterback who plays within himself and rarely makes big errors.

GRADE (max. 10): **7.0**

RUNNING BACKS After only two seasons, Thurman Thomas has emerged as one of the NFL's top running backs. Not only did he rush for 1,244 yards and six touchdowns in 1989, he also caught 60 passes (a team record for running backs) for 669 yards and six more TDs. That gave him an NFL-leading 1,913 total yards.

Thomas has great running instincts, toughness and hands. He doesn't have breakaway speed, and at 5-10, 198, he lacks size and wears down through the course of a 16-game season.

The Bills still are looking to improve themselves at fullback. They thought they had the solution in Larry Kinnebrew, whom they signed as a free agent right after the 1988 season. He added some much-needed inside punch to the Bills' running game, but he lost control of his weight as the year progressed and was inconsistent. In addition, he proved he couldn't catch or block. And he was one of the more penalized players on the team.

Fullback Jamie Mueller is a good blocker and great on special teams, but offers little as a runner and receiver. Reserve halfback Ken Davis is a north-south runner without much burst or flexibility. He can't catch the ball very well, either. Don Smith, a Plan B signee from Tampa Bay, is a candidate to replace Ronnie Harmon as the third-down receiving specialist. **GRADE** (max. 10): **6.5**

DEFENSIVE LINE The defense, which carried the brunt of the load two years ago, found itself a passenger on the back of the offense last season. Its most noticeable decline was in sacks, which fell from an AFC-leading 46 to 38.

Only Bruce Smith remains from last year's front three. Fred Smerlas, a fixture at nose tackle since 1980 and a five-time Pro Bowler, was lost as a Plan B free agent to San Francisco. His replacement, Jeff Wright, was impressive as a rookie in 1988, but his play fell off with increased exposure last season. Wright, a good athlete with electric quickness, is a fine inside pass rusher. But at 6-2, 270, he doesn't have the strength and ballast to occupy blockers and plug the middle the way Smerlas could. A big center or guard can overpower Wright.

Four-time Pro Bowler Art Still ran out of gas last season and wasn't protected. His heir at left end, Leon Seals, won't ever be the player Still was in his prime, but he'll be a big improvement on the imposter who wore No. 72 in 1989. Seals, a mobile athlete, has some pass-rush ability. However, if he's going to be a full-time starter up front, he's going to have to do a better job of keeping blockers off his body and holding ground at the point of attack.

The good news is right end Smith. When he wants to be, he's the most complete down lineman in the AFC. Mega-strong and explosive, Smith can power through offensive tackles or run around them. Last year, he had the second-highest sack total in the AFC with 13. Against the run, Smith has the low strength and balance to hold down the point and the mobility to make plays down the line. Occasional concentration lapses and a tendency to free-lance are his only blemishes. **GRADE** (max. 10): **5.0**

LINEBACKERS Owing to injuries, this unit fell far short of the lofty praise it received prior to last season.

First, inside linebacker Shane Conlan suffered a knee injury in Week 2 that sidelined him for six games. He still managed to play well enough after his return to make his second consecutive Pro Bowl. On the surface, Conlan is nothing special. He isn't a super specimen or all that athletic, and isn't always in position to make plays, but he has a 9-pound heart and overall a great feel for the game. An excellent run defender, Conlan plays off blocks very well, plugs the inside cracks and pursues with a vengeance. He's a brutal hitter. The biggest concern with Conlan is the frequency of his injuries. His reckless, aggressive style appears to be too much for his 6-3, 235-pound frame.

Knee problems also hampered Conlan's inside partner, Ray Bentley, who missed the regular season finale and the playoff game. Like Conlan, he can stand up a blocker in the hole and make plays in the line. He also makes his share of tackles in pursuit. Not as comfortable in space, Bentley is a liability in pass coverage. Third-year man Carlton Bailey, a good athlete with the size (6-2, 237) and muscle to go toe-to-toe with big offensive linemen, could be ready to make a move on Bentley's job.

Injuries short-circuited left outside linebacker Cornelius Bennett, too. He missed the equivalent of five games late in the year with a knee injury, and didn't play up to his big-play reputation all season because of a shoulder problem that dates back to his rookie year. He finished 1989 with 5½ sacks in 11-plus games, compared to 9½ the year before and 8½ in only eight games as a rookie. When (and if) healthy, Bennett is most effective on the move, using his terrific speed and quickness to run around blockers, chase down plays from the backside and shadow backs in coverage. He isn't quite the force at the point.

Right outside linebacker Darryl Talley, heading into his eighth NFL season, may have been the Bills' most consistent defender last season. He finished second on the team in tackles and had six sacks. Though not as explosive as Bennett, Talley is the prototypical mix of size, strength and natural athletic ability. He's adept in all phases.

Scott Radecic, who started 13 games at three different linebacking spots last year, is a heady, steady sort with limited athletic ability. **GRADE** (max. 10): **7.5**

DEFENSIVE BACKS This is the weakest area of the team. Opponents came up with more big pass plays last season than in 1988, and many resulted from blown assignments in the secondary.

Disaster struck in Week 3, when cornerback Derrick Burroughs sustained a blow to the back of his neck that led to the discovery of a spinal condition, ending his career. Kirby Jackson did OK in Burroughs' place, particularly face-up in short-area coverage, but he doesn't have the wheels to run with the burners. As a result, the Bills made former Fresno State standout cornerback James Williams their first-round draft pick and are counting on him to start as a rookie on the left side.

Burroughs' loss appeared to have a negative effect on right cornerback Nate Odomes. Although he still was the best of the Bills' defensive backs last season, Odomes seemed to feel a burden after Burroughs left the lineup and tried too hard to make big plays. The result was concentration lapses that caused him to slump in the season's second half. Odomes, who had five interceptions last year, has state-of-the-art cover ability: 4.4 speed, fluid change of direction and acceleration to the ball. He'll support the run, too.

Free safety Mark Kelso was opportunistic as always in '89, with a team-high six interceptions. His superb anticipation masks pedestrian speed. However, Kelso's tendency to suffer disorienting blows to the head has prompted tentativeness in his tackling. If he can't play with his old decisiveness, third-year man John Hagy might be ready to move in. He's an alert player with a killer instinct.

Strong safety Leonard Smith was his hard-hitting self last year, leading the Bills with 99 tackles. But he didn't perform nearly as well as he did in 1988, after joining Buffalo in a trade with Phoenix. Smith missed the final regular season game and the playoff with a thigh injury that bothered him for much of the season. When he's healthy, he has outstanding speed and range. But he's often in the wrong place at the wrong time, doesn't cover well, and his overzealousness continues to result in damaging penalties.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.5**

SPECIAL TEAMS The Plan B loss of John Kidd to San Diego caused the Bills to scramble for a punter. The No. 1 candidate is John Nies, their sixth-round draft pick from Arizona. They also acquired Rick "Bootin'" Tuten as an unprotected free agent from Philadelphia. Kidd's mastery of Rich Stadium's swirling winds could make him hard to replace.

Scott Norwood had a solid season (23 of 30 on field goal attempts), but will be remembered more for his short kickoffs. One against the Browns resulted in Eric Metcalf's 90-yard TD return. The Bills probably will use a kickoff specialist, although they did have the NFL's best kickoff coverage for the third year in a row, allowing only 15.8 yards per return. **GRADE** (max. 10): **5.5**

COACHING/ ORGANIZATION Marv Levy's biggest chore is ridding his club of the dissension that played a major role in its decline last season. Compounding the mess is the $20 million contract extension Kelly signed in the offseason, which could spawn resentment and further divisiveness. Healing the wounds won't be easy for Levy, who tends to avoid personnel problems and disciplinary matters. He is known among the players as the "master of overlook."

Bill Polian remains one of the better general managers in the NFL, and his star is rising among league executives, with his appointment to the competition and collective bargaining committees. But he does have a tendency to lose his cool at times. **GRADE** (max. 10): **6.0**

DRAFT The Bills addressed one obvious need with the selection of Williams, who wasn't expected to be available when they made the 16th overall pick. He's a natural cover talent with 4.29 speed and fluid turning motion. He doesn't play the ball very well, however and isn't big or tough enough to be a factor in run force. The Bills can't count on Larry Kinnebrew for the long haul, so Gardner will get plenty of chances to play as a rookie. He has fullback size and power and halfback speed, but isn't a good lead blocker and his work habits have been questioned. Third-round offensive lineman Parker is an interesting choice. He's a powerful player with excellent natural strength, despite a rather soft-looking body. He could be a player down the road. **GRADE** (max. 10): **6.0**

1990 DRAFT round number (pick in round; overall sequence): 1. (18,16) JAMES WILLIAMS, DB, Fresno State; 2. (17,42) CARWELL GARDNER, RB, Louisville; 3. (16,69) GLENN PARKER, OT, Arizona; 4. (19,100) EDDIE FULLER, RB, Louisiana State; 6. (17,154) JOHN NIES, P, Arizona; 7. (1,166) BRENT GRIFFITH, G, Minnesota-Duluth; 7. (5,170) BRENT COLLINS, LB, Carson-Newman; 7. (16,181) FRED DeRIGGI, NT, Syracuse; 8. (15,208) MARVCUS PATTON, LB, UCLA; 8. USED IN SUP. DRAFT TO PICK BRETT YOUNG; 9. (18,238) CLARKSTON HINES, WR, Duke; 10. (17,265) MIKE LODISH, DT, UCLA; 11. (16,292) AL EDWARDS, WR, Northwestern State (La.)

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VETERANS ROSTER

NO.	NAME	POS.	HT.	WT.	BIRTH-DATE	COLLEGE	NFL EXP.
54	Bailey, C.	LB	6-2	237	12/15/64	North Carolina	3
75	Ballard, H.	T	6-6	315	11/3/63	Alabama A&M	3
19	Banks, R.	WR	5-11	185	2/19/66	Eastern Illinois	2
24	Barnes, L.	WR	5-8	170	12/27/62	Oregon	2
82	Beebe, D.	WR	5-11	177	12/18/64	Chadron State	1
55	Bennett, C.	LB	6-2	235	8/25/66	Alabama	4
50	Bentley, R.	LB	6-2	235	11/25/60	Central Michigan	5
61	Burton, L.	T	6-3	277	6/18/64	South Carolina	5
90	Cofield, T.	LB	6-2	242	5/18/63	Elizabeth City St.	5
58	Conlan, S.	LB	6-3	235	4/3/64	Penn State	4
23	Davis, J.	OT	6-4	310	8/22/65	Georgia Tech	4
79	Davis, K.	RB	5-10	209	4/16/62	Texas Christian	5
45	Drane, D.	S	6-2	205	5/6/62	Oklahoma	5
85	Franklin, D.	WR	5-11	185	2/4/65	Washington	2
59	Frerotte, M.	G	6-3	280	3/30/65	Penn State	2
7	Gilbert, G.	QB	6-3	210	12/20/61	California	3
22	Hagy, J.	S	5-11	190	12/9/65	Texas	3
67	Hull, K.	C	6-5	275	1/13/61	Mississippi State	5
47	Jackson, K.	CB	5-10	180	2/2/65	Mississippi State	4
12	Kelly, J.	QB	6-3	218	2/14/60	Miami (Fla.)	5
38	Kelso, M.	S	5-11	185	7/23/63	William & Mary	5
28	Kinnebrew, L.	FB	6-2	256	6/11/60	Tennessee State	7
63	Lingner, A.	C	6-4	268	11/2/60	Illinois	8
80	Lofton, J.	WR	6-3	190	7/5/56	Stanford	13
68	Marshall, D.	T	6-4	305	6/9/65	Southern Cal	1
84	McKeller, K.	TE	6-4	245	7/9/64	Jacksonville State	3
88	Metzelaars, P.	TE	6-7	250	5/24/60	Wabash	9
36	Mitchell, D.	S	6-1	198	12/30/62	Iowa	2
57	Monger, M.	LB	6-1	240	11/15/61	Oklahoma State	5
39	Mueller, J.	FB	6-1	230	10/4/64	Benedictine	4
11	Norwood, S.	K	6-0	207	7/17/60	James Madison	6
37	Odomes, N.	CB	5-10	188	8/25/65	Wisconsin	4
94	Pike, M.	DE	6-4	272	12/27/63	Georgia Tech	4
97	Radecic, S.	LB	6-3	236	6/14/62	Penn State	7
83	Reed, A.	WR	6-1	190	1/29/64	Kutztown	6
14	Reich, F.	QB	6-4	210	12/14/61	Maryland	6
40	Riddick, R.	RB	6-0	195	4/26/57	Millersville State	8
51	Ritcher, J.	G	6-3	273	5/21/58	N.C. State	11
87	Rolle, B.	TE	6-4	245	8/19/64	Michigan State	5
96	Seals, L.	DE	6-5	267	1/30/64	Jackson State	4
30	*Smith, D.	RB	5-11	200	10/30/63	Mississippi State	4
46	Smith, L.	S	5-11	202	9/2/60	McNeese State	8
78	Smith, B.	DE	6-4	280	6/18/63	Virginia Tech	6
20	Sutton, M.	DB	5-9	172	8/28/60	Montana	5
56	Talley, D.	LB	6-4	235	7/10/60	West Virginia	8
89	Tasker, S.	WR	5-9	185	4/10/62	Northwestern	6
34	Thomas, T.	RB	5-10	198	5/16/66	Oklahoma State	3
3	*Tuten, R.	P	6-2	218	1/5/65	Florida State	1
69	Wolford, W.	T	6-5	290	5/8/64	Vanderbilt	5
91	Wright, J.	NT	6-2	270	6/13/63	C. Missouri State	3

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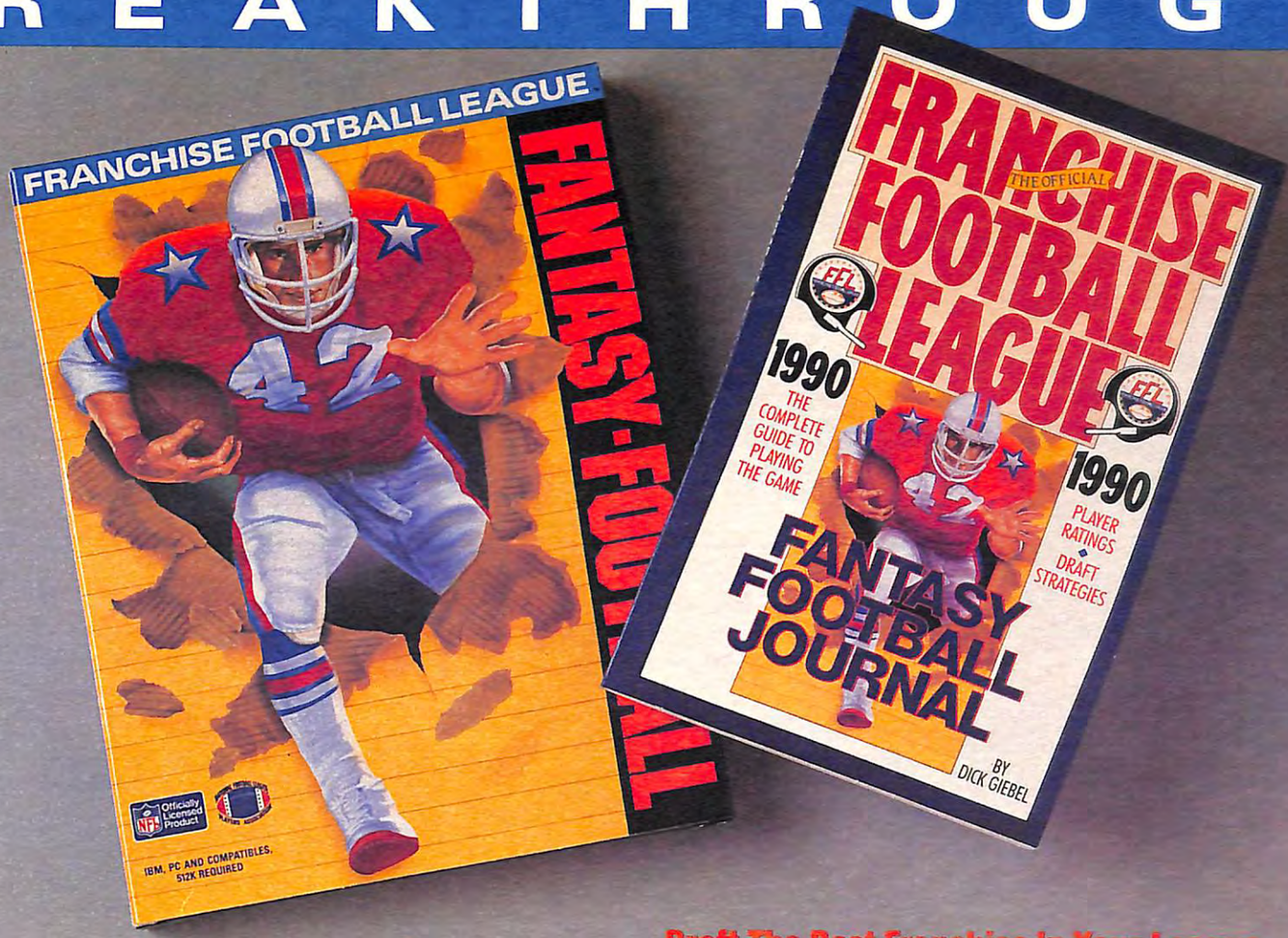

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INDIANAPOLIS COLTS

1989 RECORD: 8-8 HEAD COACH: RON MEYER STADIUM: HOOSIER DOME (60,129)

Perhaps the most disturbing element of the Indianapolis Colts' 1989 season was the finish. With a playoff berth on the line, they suffered a 41-6 loss to the New Orleans Saints, finished with an 8-8 record and missed the postseason tournament for the second consecutive time since winning the division title in 1987. It was, by all counts, an inexcusable defeat. How could the players have allowed themselves to be so flat in a game that meant so much? How could Ron Meyer and his coaching staff have permitted it?

For the second year in a row, the Colts found themselves digging out from an early hole. They began the 1988 campaign 1-5, and '89 0-2. A slow beginning this season could be difficult for the players to overcome psychologically, not to mention dangerous to Meyer's job security.

The pressure was already intense, but it became even hotter with the blockbuster trade that resulted in the Colts making Illinois quarterback Jeff George the No. 1 overall pick of the draft. Considering the price the Colts paid the Atlanta Falcons, which included starting offensive tackle Chris Hinton and wide receiver Andre Rison, George must be immediately productive or the club will face major embarrassment. And he may be asked to pick up more than a little slack, should running back Eric Dickerson play elsewhere or enter retirement.

WIDE RECEIVERS/ TIGHT END The Colts are going to have to find a replacement for Rison, and it won't be easy. As a rookie in 1989, he tied running back Albert Bentley for second on the team in receptions with 52 for 820 yards and four touchdowns.

Bill Brooks continued to be the main man in the Colts' pass offense last season, with a team-high 63 catches for 919 yards and four TDs. He has averaged 58.3 receptions per year since his rookie season in 1986. There may not be a more underrated wideout in the NFL. Brooks is a complete receiver with quickness off the line, the acceleration to separate from a defender and the athletic ability to turn a short flip into a big play. A smooth runner with tremendous leaping ability, he's at his best running intermediate routes over the middle.

Clarence Verdin probably will move into Rison's spot, but he doesn't offer the same dimension. He is strictly a home run hitter with world-class speed. Though he's always dangerous and can stretch the coverage, Verdin, at 5-8 and 170 pounds, is susceptible to being overpowered on the press. Plus, he lacks the feel to consistently find holes in zone coverage, and his hands aren't terribly reliable.

Pat Beach, the starter at tight end since 1985, is a solid in-line blocker. At 6-4, 252, he comes off the ball very aggressively and stays after his blocks. Beach isn't much of a receiving threat, though. While he's a good target with decent hands, he has a pronounced lack of speed and quickness. **GRADE** (max. 10): **4.5**

OFFENSIVE LINE The Colts lost their best offensive lineman when Hinton was traded to Atlanta. Last season just happened to be one of the best of his career. The Colts may have landed a franchise quarterback, but how will they protect him?

Randy Dixon, who started at left guard last season, is expected to replace Hinton at left tackle. It won't be an easy transition, since he was struggling to find his way at guard. While Dixon is regarded as a good athlete, most scouts shudder at the thought of him as a blindside pass protector. Speed rushers cause him grief, and the better their second move, the more difficult it is for Dixon to adjust. Strong, with quickness off the ball, he fares better as a run blocker. Dixon tends to get lazy, however, and has been known to blow assignments.

If Dixon moves outside, Zefross Moss is a candidate to fill the vacancy at left guard. Moss is bigger than all outdoors (6-6, and somewhere between 300 and 360 pounds). He isn't as mobile as most teams want a guard to be, but isn't a bad athlete at 300 pounds. Brian Baldinger, an overachiever who struggles to keep his weight up, is also a possibility if Moss eats himself into oblivion.

Age and the wear and tear of 10 NFL campaigns are beginning to gain on center Ray Donaldson. Despite being selected to the Pro Bowl, he had an up-and-down season in 1989. Donaldson's principal attributes are his quick hands and feet, which allow him to get out on linebackers or slide in pass protection against the nose tackle, or whomever comes his way on a stunt. Better blocking for the run than pass, he delivers a jarring blow and stays on his feet.

Right guard is open, with Ben Utt having joined the Falcons in Plan B. Not that he was any great loss. Utt's likely replacement is Pat Tomberlin, a fourth-round draft pick last year from Florida State. Tomberlin, who missed his entire rookie season due to injuries suffered in an auto accident, is a wide body with great strength. He's just a big hog who can move people. While he's a force in-line as a run blocker, Tomberlin lacks the speed to pull (5.5) and the quick feet and long arms you like to see in a pass protector.

Right tackle Kevin Call didn't play with much enthusiasm last year. Nor did he play well. When his mind and heart are in it, Call is an effective player. Despite slow feet, he's a solid pass blocker with long arms and good body control. As a run blocker, Call tends to push and smother, rather than rock and drive. **GRADE** (max. 10): **5.0**

QUARTERBACK Most scouts agree Jeff George is potentially a good quarterback. The question is, will he be a franchise player? Will he join the elite group of NFL quarterbacks such as Joe Montana, Dan Marino and John Elway? Or will he find a place at the next level, with Phil Simms, Jim Kelly and Bernie Kosar?

It is unlikely George will be a flat-out bust. But the price the Colts paid to acquire him will be forever linked to everything he does and, especially, doesn't do. It is the Dickerson trade all over again.

Chris Chandler, last year's No. 1 going into the season, had reconstructive knee surgery after the third game and missed the rest of the year. Club officials claim he has recovered well, but with mobility a big part of his game, there is some concern whether the injury will cause him to lose a step or become hesitant to run. Even with George on hand, the 24-year-old Chandler cannot be ruled out as a possible starter, at least at the beginning of the season. Chandler has a strong arm to complement his all-around athletic ability. In addition, he's very bright and competitive. But Chandler often follows big plays with big errors. He has a tendency to hold the ball too long and struggles reading coverages.

Jack Trudeau, who started 12 games last season, is a more polished quarterback than Chandler, but doesn't make enough happen. It isn't likely he'll stick around for the No. 3 job. **GRADE** (max. 10): **5.5**

RUNNING BACKS Physically, Eric Dickerson wasn't quite as dominating last year as in previous seasons. He still has great speed, explosiveness and power, but doesn't seem to possess the quick moves that keep him from getting hit. He used to be able to avoid the first tackler 65-70 percent of the time. Now, the rate is down to about 50 percent.

Unable to control the ball with authority last season, the Colts plan to go to more two-back sets in 1990, rather than the one-back concept that had Dickerson carrying the brunt of the load. Dickerson was bothered throughout the 1989 campaign by a nagging hamstring injury. He missed one game, and, despite ranking second in the AFC with 1,311 rushing yards, his 4.18-yards-per-carry average was the lowest of his career.

The Colts are looking for a traditional fullback as the second back in their offense, and a leading candidate for the role is 6-0, 237-pound Ivy Joe Hunter. He is simply a straight-for-the-goal-line runner. They also made Notre Dame fullback Anthony Johnson their second-round draft pick.

Having spent the past 2½ seasons in Dickerson's shadow, Albert Bentley is considered one of the more underrated running backs in the NFL. He doesn't have Dickerson's ability to explode to daylight, but he's a good inside runner with initial quickness and fine vision. He's also a tough, determined blocker and a top receiver out of the backfield. Somewhat injury-prone, Bentley probably wouldn't be able to survive the pounding as an every-down back.

GRADE (max. 10): **7.5**

DEFENSIVE LINE After unsuccessfully experimenting with a blitz-happy approach last year, the Colts are going back to relying on their defensive line to generate most of the pressure on opposing quarterbacks.

Left end Donnell Thompson is a blue-collar player. Durable and steady, he does a good job controlling blockers and shutting down the run. However, he plays a little tall at times and is vulnerable to cut blocks. Thompson is a sheer bull rusher; he makes no attempt to dazzle blockers with moves. And he isn't terribly quick.

Harvey Armstrong had a respectable season at nose tackle in 1989. He played very well early, but, thanks largely to chronic knee problems, wore down toward the end of the year. Unlike most nose tackles, Armstrong is at his best when he's using his quickness on the move to get around blocks. He isn't as proficient taking blockers on; too often he lets folks get to his body. Though he penetrates well versus the run, Armstrong isn't much of a pass rusher and usually leaves the field in obvious passing situations. Mitchell Benson, a rookie last year, will challenge Armstrong for the starting job if his weight is down and enthusiasm up. He's a big, thick, inside slugger with some quickness. Even if Benson doesn't start, he's expected to spell Armstrong frequently.

Right end Jon Hand had a team-high 10 sacks for minus-85 yards last season, becoming the first double-digit sacker on the defensive line since the Colts moved to Indianapolis. Hand also led the team with four forced fumbles, and recovered two others. He has developed into a first-rate pass rusher, with the versatility to beat blockers with quickness and finesse (excellent swim move) as well as power. At 6-7 and 300-plus, he is also a load at the point of attack, controlling blockers and creating piles.

With Ezra Johnson having left for Houston in Plan B, Sam Clancy is expected to see more playing time as a pass-rushing specialist. A former basketball player, Clancy has long arms and runs well. Single-minded, he makes no pretense of playing the run. **GRADE** (max. 10): **6.5**

LINEBACKERS Right outside linebacker Duane Bickett continues to be the Colts' best defensive player. Last year, he was bothered by nagging injuries, but still managed to finish third on the team in sacks with eight and fourth in tackles with 100.

Bickett is a factor, whether he's in an up position taking on the tight end or down on the line as a pass rusher. A Ted Hendricks type with long arms and good mobility, there isn't much he can't do. He's adept at the point, stringing out the sweep and dropping into zones. His only weakness continues to be man-on-man pass coverage.

Jeff Herrod, who led the Colts in tackles last season with 154, is an emerging force on the inside. Similar to the Bears' Mike Singletary in size (6-0, 246) and style, Herrod is a non-stop hustler and all-out hitter. He isn't the diag-

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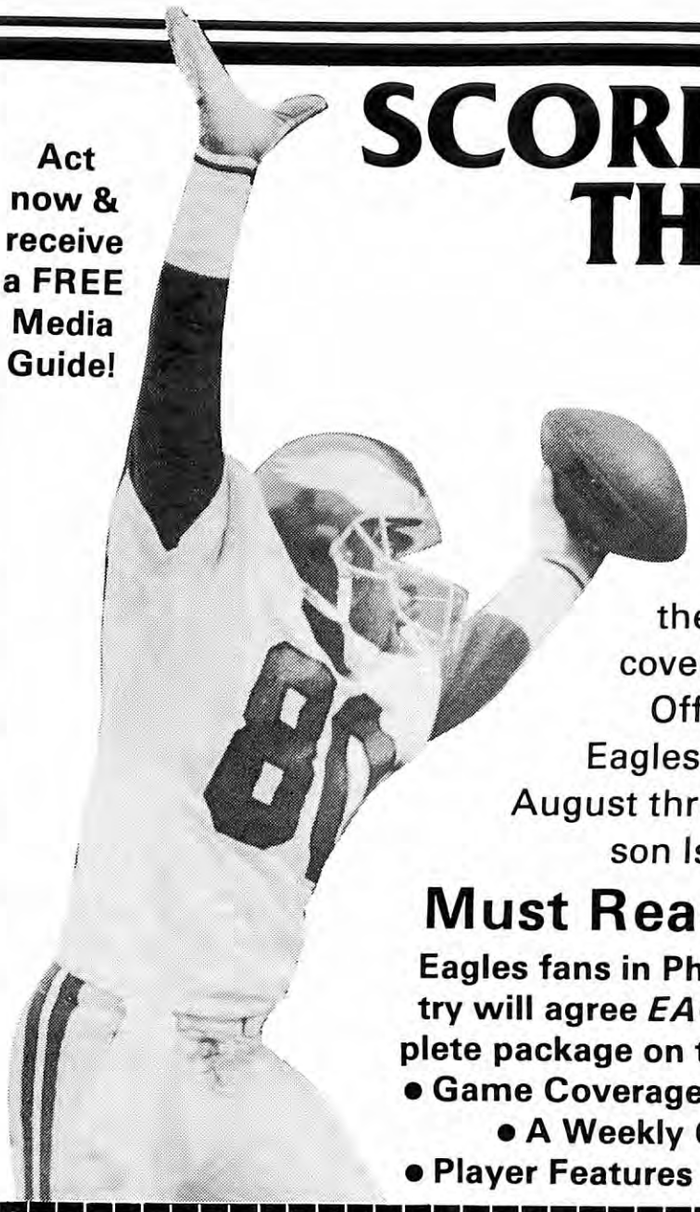

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nostician Singletary is, but that facet of his play should improve. Herrod is at his best taking on blockers and stuffing the inside running game, yet has pretty good lateral movement and doesn't embarrass himself in pass coverage.

Fredd Young has been a big disappointment at the other inside spot. Young, who came to Indianapolis from Seattle in 1988 for two first-round draft picks, has slipped in most aspects of his game. Speed and quickness — his chief assets — help him produce some spectacular collisions. However, he doesn't make enough routine plays between the tackles, and his 4.6 speed doesn't translate into good pass coverage.

Left outside linebacker Chip Banks played surprisingly well after a year-and-a-half layoff due to drug problems. He eventually took over for O'Brien Alston, who underwent reconstructive knee surgery after the fourth game. Once Banks found his rhythm, he was a reasonable facsimile of his old physical self, shedding blocks and shredding ballcarriers. Rushing the passer remains his forte. He's strong with good acceleration, and if a back picks him up, Banks tramples him. He doesn't move quite as well in reverse.

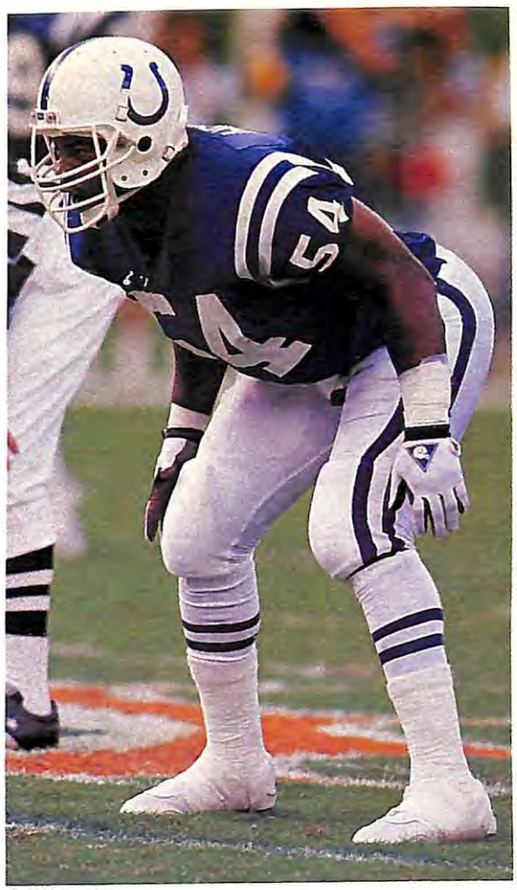
Questions linger about how well Alston will rebound from his injury. Quintus McDonald, a rookie last season, has the size and athletic ability to come on.

GRADE (max. 10): **8.0**

DEFENSIVE BACKS

Free safety Mike Prior, who gets maximum mileage out of pedestrian ability, is probably the best player in a talent-thin secondary. He was second on the team last year with six interceptions, including one he returned 58 yards for a touchdown, giving the Colts a 23-17 overtime victory against Cleveland. Prior has great feel, gets a good jump on the ball and invariably winds up in the right place at the right time.

Bill Brooks



Jeff Herrod

Strong safety Michael Ball plays as if his hair is on fire. Well-built and tough, Ball loves to mix it up in run support and intimidate receivers who venture into his territory. He's a punishing tackler. Though he's better in zones, Ball is adequate in man coverage when matched up with a tight end. His biggest flaw is that he gets out of control at times and plays his own defense.

The corners are a problem. Eugene Daniel, quick and agile, has pretty good man-on-man cover ability. However, he lacks catch-up speed and doesn't play the ball very well. When he gets smoked deep, which happens to all corners, even ones with great recovery speed, Daniel tends to lose confidence.

Left corner has been a revolving door since the Colts' first season in Indianapolis. Last year, Chris Goode and John Baylor each started eight games at the position. Both lack speed and man-on-man coverage skills. Goode plays the ball well. Baylor is a hitter who might be better off inside.

Nickel back Keith Taylor, an opportunistic sort, makes a lot of plays. He led the team with seven interceptions, including a theft he returned 80 yards for a touchdown against the Bills.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.0**

SPECIAL TEAMS

Although the 94 points he scored last season was his lowest total in two years, Dean Biasucci continues to rank as one of the better kickers in the league. He connected on 21 of 27 field goals, and he has hit 51 of his last 55 attempts from within 45 yards. Punter Rohn Stark had an up-and-down '89 season. His 42.9-yard average on 79 punts was the second-lowest of his career, but still good enough to put him in sixth place in the league.

Clarence Verdin was first in the AFC and second in the NFL last year with a 12.9-yard average on 23 punt returns. He had the second scoring return of his NFL career, racing 49 yards for the winning touchdown in a 17-10 victory over the Jets.

GRADE (max. 10): **7.5**

COACHING/ ORGANIZATION

One thing seems certain about the Colts: They are loaded with talent, having acquired several high-round draft picks. Therefore, the obvious question is, why have they been unable to qualify for the playoffs the past two seasons? That doesn't reflect well on the job Ron Meyer has done. Nor does the fact the team is constantly filled with discontent. Meyer fired several assistants after the 1988 season, including the offensive and defensive coordinators. But that did nothing to enhance the offense or tighten the defense last year. Big, bold trades are becoming the norm for the Colts. They shook up the NFL with the Dickerson deal in 1987, and did the same with the George trade. When your father owns the team, as is the case with GM Jim Irsay, it's easy to take such risks.

GRADE (max. 10): **4.5**

DRAFT

Trading for George was a risk that might very well blow up in the Colts' collective face. While he has a strong arm and electric release, George was rated no better than a third- or fourth-rounder by a number of scouts. Some think Chandler has more potential. Johnson is the key to the Colts' switch to a predominant two-back offense. He runs low and hard, and is a solid lead blocker. Simmons, a fourth-rounder from Florida, won't fill Rison's shoes but has good tools. Schultz, a tackle at USC, figures as a pro guard. He's a smash-mouth run blocker with enough niftiness to handle interior pass-blocking chores.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.5**

1990 DRAFT round number (pick in round; overall sequence): 1. (2,1) JEFF GEORGE, QB, Illinois; 2. (11,36) ANTHONY JOHNSON, RB, Notre Dame; 4. (2,83) STACEY SIMMONS, WR, Florida; 4. (13,94) BILL SCHULTZ, OG, Southern California; 4. (22,103) ALAN GRANT, DB, Stanford; 4. (25,106) PAT CUNNINGHAM, OT, Texas A&M; 6. (11,148) TONY WALKER, LB, Southeast Missouri State; 7. (14,179) JAMES SINGLETARY, LB, East Carolina; 8. (13,206) KEN CLARK, RB, Nebraska; 8. (21,213) HARVEY WILSON, DB, Southern University; 9. (12,232) DARVELL HUFFMAN, WR, Boston University; 11. (14,290) CARNEL SMITH, DE, Pittsburgh; 12. (8,311) GENE BENHART, QB, Western Illinois; 12. (13,316) DEAN BROWN, OG, Notre Dame.

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VETERANS ROSTER

NO.	NAME	POS.	HT.	WT.	BIRTH-DATE	COLLEGE	NFL EXP.
97	Alston, O.	LB	6-6	251	12/21/65	Maryland	3
79	Armstrong, H.	NT	6-3	282	12/29/59	SMU	8
62	Baldinger, B.	G	6-4	272	1/7/59	Duke	8
94	Baldinger, G.	DE	6-2	260	10/4/63	Wake Forest	4
31	Ball, M.	DB	6-0	217	8/5/64	Southern U.	3
51	Banks, C.	LB	6-4	245	9/18/59	Southern Cal	8
36	Baylor, J.	DB	6-0	203	3/5/65	Southern Miss	2
81	Beach, P.	TE	6-4	252	12/28/59	Washington State	8
44	Bell, J.	RB	6-0	205	6/24/65	Boston College	1
95	Benson, M.	DT	6-3	302	5/30/67	Texas Christian	2
20	Bentley, A.	RB	5-11	214	8/15/60	Miami (Fla.)	6
4	Biasucci, D.	K	6-0	189	7/25/62	Western Carolina	6
50	Bickett, D.	LB	6-5	251	12/1/62	Southern Cal	6
80	Brooks, B.	WR	6-0	185	4/6/64	Boston University	5
71	Call, K.	OT	6-7	308	11/13/61	Colorado State	7
17	Chandler, C.	QB	6-4	218	10/12/65	Washington	3
76	Clancy, S.	DE	6-7	284	5/29/58	Pittsburgh	7
66	Conlin, C.	OL	6-4	285	6/7/65	Penn State	2
38	Daniel, E.	CB	5-11	188	5/4/61	LSU	7
49	Davis, P.	TE	6-3	257	6/13/66	Syracuse	1
52	Dean, K.	LB	6-1	235	2/5/65	Texas Christian	2
29	Dickerson, E.	RB	6-3	224	9/2/60	SMU	8
69	Dixon, R.	OT	6-3	302	3/12/65	Pittsburgh	4
53	Donaldson, R.	C	6-3	292	5/18/58	Georgia	11
67	Eisenhooth, S.	OL	6-5	290	7/8/63	Towson State	3
37	Goode, C.	DB	6-0	195	9/17/63	Alabama	4
78	Hand, J.	DE	6-7	301	12/13/63	Alabama	5
33	Henderson, J.	RB	6-0	205	4/9/66	Iowa State	1
54	Herrod, J.	LB	6-0	246	7/29/66	Mississippi	3
84	Hester, J.	WR	5-11	175	1/21/63	Florida State	5
25	Holloway, C.	DB	5-11	185	1/30/66	Pittsburgh	1
45	Hunter, I.	RB	6-0	237	11/16/66	Kentucky	2
63	Knight, S.	OL	6-4	326	3/13/62	Tennessee	2
57	Kolic, L.	LB	6-1	239	8/31/63	Ohio State	3
59	Larson, K.	LB	6-4	236	2/25/66	Michigan State	2
96	McDonald, Q.	LB	6-3	240	12/14/66	Penn State	2
90	McNanie, S.	DE	6-5	265	9/9/61	San Diego State	7
73	Moss, Z.	OL	6-6	315	8/17/66	Alabama State	2
39	Prior, M.	DB	6-0	210	11/14/63	Illinois State	5
86	Pruitt, J.	WR	6-3	201	1/29/64	Cal St. Fullerton	5
14	Ramsey, T.	QB	6-1	185	7/9/61	UCLA	6
75	Rentie, C.	OT	6-3	291	11/10/64	Oklahoma	2
3	Stark, R.	P	6-3	203	5/4/59	Florida State	9
27	Taylor, K.	DB	5-11	206	12/21/64	Illinois	3
99	Thompson, D.	DE	6-4	280	10/27/58	North Carolina	10
68	Tomberlin, P.	OT	6-2	312	1/29/66	Florida State	1
10	Trudeau, J.	QB	6-3	219	9/9/62	Illinois	5
83	Verdin, C.	WR	5-8	170	6/14/63	Southwestern La.	5
21	Wright, B.	RB	5-10	210	9/19/65	Alabama	1
56	Young, F.	LB	6-1	235	11/14/61	New Mexico State	7

No Plan B

NEW YORK JETS

1989 RECORD: 4-12 HEAD COACH: BRUCE COSLET STADIUM: GIANTS (77,152)

It was the day after Christmas and Dick Steinberg didn't particularly feel like playing Scrooge, but the New York Jets' new general manager assessed the ruins of a 4-12 season and realized a purge was in order. Steinberg, who had served since 1981 as the player personnel director of the New England Patriots before being hired by the Jets on Dec. 18, fired head coach Joe Walton and his entire staff and accepted the resignation of player personnel director Mike Hickey.

For an organization with a history that suggested it cherished the status quo more than winning, these were the most sweeping changes since 1963, when the New York Titans were purchased for $1 million and transformed into the Jets. Steinberg is the first football man to run the organization since Weeb Ewbank retired at the end of the 1974 season.

The past is dead. After a 42-day, 12-man search, Steinberg hired former Cincinnati Bengals offensive coordinator Bruce Coslet as his new head coach. Coslet was Steinberg's second or even third choice — Michigan State's George Perles was No. 1 on Steinberg's wish list — but as Coslet said, all that is "ancient history" if he is successful.

The task is formidable. In 1989, the Jets' defense finished last in the NFL in touchdown passes allowed (31) and in sacks (28), next to last in yards allowed (374.6 per game) and 25th in points allowed (411) and in takeaways (24). The offense produced only 253 points, the lowest 16-game total in club history. A young offensive line that was so impressive after a magnificent finish in 1988 collapsed last season, and that is foreboding news to battered quarterbacks Ken O'Brien and Tony Eason.

Steinberg says Coslet is a "disciplinarian, motivator and teacher," and all three talents will be needed to change the losing atmosphere around a team that has not won a division title since 1969.

WIDE RECEIVERS/ TIGHT END

In his first four seasons — three of them as a Pro Bowler — Al Toon bounced off linebackers and kamikaze cornerbacks like a rubber ball off the stoop of a Brooklyn brownstone. Toon was virtually indestructible, missing only one game because of injury.

But not even Toon was resilient enough last year to overcome the holdout jinx. After taking the summer off to negotiate a three-year $3.975 million contract — making him the highest-paid receiver in the NFL and the second-highest-paid Jet to O'Brien — Toon reported uncharacteristically out of shape. He was soft and had lost muscle tone. The result was predictable: a litany of injuries. Toon sprained his right shoulder on the first pass thrown to him in the final preseason game. A few weeks later, he strained a quad muscle in practice. Still limping in Week 5, Toon severely sprained both ankles against the Los Angeles Raiders and was shelved for a month.

Toon recuperated and led the Jets with 63 catches for 693 yards, but he was not the same fearless, physical presence. Anyone who has been around Toon can vouch for his competitive drive and toughness, and Coslet will tailor the new offensive system not only to get the ball to Toon on his trademark short-hitch patterns, but also to get the ball to him deep. Toon is a long strider, yet he can gracefully evade the press and has the strength to muscle corners off the line. He overwhelms defenders on the quick slant, but his 4.5 speed and leaping ability should make him a dangerous downfield threat.

Until last season, JoJo Townsell was thought of as a shifty punt returner and medium-range possession receiver. But last year he surprised everyone by averaging 17.5 yards a catch, blowing past corners for TD catches of 63 yards and two of 49. Townsell doesn't have sprinter's speed, but he sets up defenders with his shoulder move-

Jeff Lageman

ment and an up-and-down stutter-step. He gets in and out of his cuts quickly, and his route running is very precise.

The Jets lack speed and depth at wide receiver. Chris Burkett is a huge target at 6-4, but his long stride makes him an inviting target for the jam. Burkett also can't do much damage after the catch, lacks burst and drops too many passes.

After tutoring Rodney Holman in Cincinnati, Coslet knows how important a tight end is to an offense, and he has a remarkably productive veteran in Mickey Shuler, who missed the last half of the '89 season with a sprained right knee. Shuler, 33, hasn't lost much of his 4.7 speed, but what sets him apart is his ability to instantly size up coverages and to use a defender's foot movement and weight shift against him to find the dead area in a zone. The Jets sorely missed Shuler as a blocker last year. He is only 231 pounds, but he's effective doubling down on an end and rarely misses a seal block.

Keith Neubert, Shuler's backup, is a former basketball player with excellent size (6-5, 250) and athletic ability. He has great practice hands, but don't expect him to tuck it away on game day. His blocking is a liability. That could come in time, though. Neubert only played one season of college football at Nebraska. **GRADE** (max. 10): **6.5**

OFFENSIVE LINE

How many offensive linemen does it take to screw a quarterback into the ground? Only one, but the Jets specialized in the five-man jailbreak last year, and O'Brien barely lived to talk about it.

Steinberg knows how poor the protection was: His primary goal in Plan B was to bring in some major league beef. Steinberg signed four free agents — center/guard Trevor Matich (Patriots No. 1, 1985); guard/tackle Tom Rehder (Patriots No. 3, 1988); tackle Brett Miller (part-time starter, Chargers); and guard/tackle Dave Zawatson (Bears; second-round pick, 1989). All four players have the size that Steinberg loves, and they should fit into the Jets' man-on-man, drive-blocking scheme.

Coslet does not have his starting five etched in stone — how can he? — but he would like to move center Jim Sweeney, the Jets' only reliable returning veteran, back to guard and have Matich take over at center. Sweeney can play anywhere on the line. Very consistent, he comes off the ball quickly, has excellent body control and uses his hands exceptionally well. He's the rock Coslet can build around.

Can Matich play? Some say he was squeezed out of New England (and picked up by Detroit) because line coach Guy Morriss played favorites with Mike Baab. Matich is a smooth, quick-footed technician who's more adept in space and pass protection than in a down-and-dirty power matchup. The fact that he's never grabbed the bull by the horns and won a starting job is a minus. His ability to fill in along the line and deep snap are pluses.

After an impressive season in 1988, left tackle Jeff Criswell went down with the ship last year. Despite natural pass-blocking skills (long arms, good feet and balance), he was lunch for nearly every upfield pass rusher. At 6-7, 290, Criswell has enough strength and quickness to drive block adequately. But he didn't show the necessary resolve last season. If the fire doesn't return, neither will he.

Dave Cadigan, a No. 1 bust to this point, will be given every opportunity to win a job at left guard or right tackle. Coming out of USC in 1988, he appeared to have it all: size, strength, speed, agility and work ethic. His strength, which allegedly was enhanced by steroids after USC, hasn't been evident in the NFL. A chronically bad foot also has slowed his progress. If his work at minicamp is any indication, Cadigan may be ready to lift his game to the pro level.

Because of his Steinberg connections, Rehder may play a prominent role. He played only two years of offensive line at Notre Dame after starting out at tight end. Miller, a part-time starter for offensive line coach Larry Beightol at Atlanta and San Diego, isn't the athlete Rehder is, but he's familiar with the system. Best equipped to play right tackle, Miller is a masher who blocks better for the run than the pass. Zawatson, a whiz kid from Cal-Berkeley, has advanced pass-blocking skills. **GRADE** (max. 10): **4.0**

QUARTERBACK

Call it The Million-Dollar Question: Will it be O'Brien ($1.3 million) or Eason ($1.25 million)? Coslet will be judged more by the way he handles the "wide-open" competition between the two million-dollar quarterbacks than on anything else. After losing power in his arm the last two seasons, O'Brien underwent arthroscopic surgery on his throwing shoulder last December. Initial reports are encouraging, but O'Brien needs to test the arm under fire.

Eason, O'Brien's good buddy, has his own baggage: Why would the Patriots cut a former No. 1 pick in the middle of the season rather than try to trade him at the end of the year when they might get value in return? Apparently, Raymond Berry thought Eason was so psychologically fragile that he no longer could be effective in front of the Foxboro boo birds.

O'Brien entered his last six seasons as the Jets' outright No. 1, but Coslet wants a battle. O'Brien has lost several yards off his fastball after absorbing 239 sacks in the past five seasons. Last year, O'Brien was an orthopedic nightmare: His injuries included a broken middle left toe, a chip fracture of his left thumb, a sprained ankle and knee, a swollen right elbow, bruised ribs, bicep tendinitis in the right arm and two concussions.

As insignificant as it sounds, the toe injury he sustained in preseason probably did more than anything to impair O'Brien's throwing motion. He could not push off properly, and most of his incompletions sailed high. For the first time since his rookie season, he threw more interceptions (18) than TD passes (12).

Eason reluctantly joined the Jets after being claimed on waivers at midseason and proceeded to drive Walton crazy by not diligently studying the Yellow Pages-size playbook. Eason does not have O'Brien's gun, but he releases the ball much quicker and is extremely accurate. That could win him points with Coslet, who wants to emphasize quick drops and timing patterns to reduce the

pressure on the offensive line. Eason also has better mobility than the slow-footed O'Brien, but not the toughness.

GRADE (max. 10): 6.0

RUNNING BACKS It took nine seasons, but the torch has been passed. Freeman McNeil, the Jets' franchise running back, probably will see action this year as a role player if he is not traded. Johnny Hector, a Steinberg favorite because of his heroic efforts against the Patriots, will move into prime time.

Hector missed the opening game last year because of a holdout and reported out of shape. He still finished ninth in the AFC with 702 yards and a 4-yard average. He is a rare all-around back. In addition to a great change of direction, Hector can challenge linebackers inside with his surprisingly strong upper torso. He is amazingly effective in short yardage, using his cutting ability to dart through creases and his incredible leaping ability to soar over the pile. Though Hector is quick to the hole, he isn't a home run hitter. He is an excellent third-down receiver, finishing as the Jets' third-leading receiver last season with 38 catches.

The Jets have been waiting for Roger Vick (6-3, 228) to blossom, and Coslet's love of big backs could be the spark Vick's career needs. On a 26-yard scoring run last year, Vick ran away from Miami safety Louis Oliver and tiptoed the final 7 yards into the end zone. Coslet needs to ride Vick hard to improve his blocking. He's got the ability; sometimes he just doesn't seem to care.

McNeil played his way into Walton's doghouse last year when he lost his mental focus after making a clean block on Indianapolis linebacker O'Brien Alston, shredding Alston's knee. When healthy, McNeil still can be effective with his flowing style, setting up his blockers and then countering. He's a cruiser, not a burner, so he's less affected by losing a tick in the 40. **GRADE (max. 10): 6.5**

DEFENSIVE LINE When Coslet appointed Minnesota Vikings secondary coach Pete Carroll as defensive coordinator, he told him he wanted to rush the passer and play bump-and-run. Carroll looked at tapes of 1989 No. 1 Jeff Lageman, who played right outside linebacker as a rookie, and decided to have him play right defensive end, the position manned on the Vikings by Chris Doleman. It could be an inspired move. Then again, Lageman is not Doleman.

Lageman (6-5, 250) was one of the few ornery cusses on a defense that was bullied last year. He hung in tough at the point, and showed tremendous ability to cut through traffic and make plays in pursuit. Because he's cut high, Lageman is vulnerable to the chop-block. Whether he is quick enough at end to get to the quarterback remains to be seen.

Dennis Byrd likely will line up next to Lageman at right tackle. Byrd, who caught fire late in his rookie season, could be the featured pass rusher. Though he lacks closing speed, he used a powerful club move and good quickness to compile seven sacks last season, second-highest by a rookie lineman in the NFL. Byrd, a hustling, aggressive competitor, plays off blockers nicely and won his share of battles at the point last year.

Ron Stallworth, the starting right end at the close of last season, probably will move to the left side in 1990. While he lacks the upfield acceleration you like in a pass rusher and the ballast you want in a run defender, Stallworth does an above-average job in both facets of play. He's smart, uses his long arms and hands effectively, and stays on his feet. Though he's a bit on the stiff side, he has a chance to be a solid player.

The other inside spot is up for grabs. Scott Mersereau, who started most of last season at nose tackle, is certainly a candidate. He has muscles on muscles, but doesn't use his strength to full advantage. Marty Lyons has won his share of trench battles, but is losing the war to Father Time and injuries.

Since the Vikings' defense stresses pass rush first and run responsibility second, Marvin Washington and Gerald Nichols could benefit in the Jets' new concept. Washington, a former basketball player, can be ridden into the ground, but when he guesses right he is in the quarterback's face. Nichols (6-2, 267) isn't big enough to play every down, but his hand speed and leverage make him an excellent inside rusher. **GRADE (max. 10): 5.0**

LINEBACKERS Lageman may be used in an up position in certain defenses, but the Jets are committed to playing him down. That prompts a search for a weakside linebacker with blitzing ability. Rookie Basil Proctor is a possibility. He has a great body and runs well, but doesn't make plays. Another candidate is Plan B pickup Joe Kohlbrand, a big, strong, nasty linebacker who made a name for himself as a special teams terror in New Orleans.

Kyle Clifton, the Jets' leading tackler four of the past five years, figures as the middle linebacker in the new 4-3. He has a sense of the game, takes good angles of pursuit and runs well. While his range is first-rate, Clifton has problems taking on blockers and making plays in the line. Too many of his tackles come 5 yards downfield.

Strongside linebacker Alex Gordon looks the part. He's big (6-5, 246), strong and athletic. However, Gordon doesn't always play as good as he looks. A classic in-and-out player, he'll knock your eyes out chasing down a play from the backside and then get hooked easily by a tight end who has no business getting to his legs. Gordon needs to get more consistent in all phases, especially holding down the fort against the strongside run.

Joe Mott, who backs up Gordon, confined his work to special teams last year. He was an excellent blitzer in college and moved better than expected in pass-coverage drills. Troy Benson, a hard-nosed, tackle-to-tackle run stuffer, has limited mobility and a chronic neck problem.

GRADE (max. 10): 4.0

DEFENSIVE BACKS Free safety Erik McMillan is a difference-maker. Sure, McMillan makes coverage mistakes — he got caught out of position occasionally last year, overran several plays and missed a couple of open-field tackles —but he is a lethal big-play force. In the first eight games, McMillan returned two fumbles and one interception for touchdowns, making him the Jets' third-leading scorer during that period.

McMillan, fast and instinctive, is one of those rare athletes who could line up anywhere on the field and help you win. He lined up at right defensive end in a special blitz package against Miami last year and blew in to strip Dan Marino of the football. It was the Jets' first sack of Marino since 1986.

Carroll plans to revive the bump-and-run style that cornerback James Hasty found so appealing as a rookie in 1988. Hasty seemed to pout last year in the zone-oriented system of defensive coordinator Ralph Hawkins. Big (6-0, 197) and swift, Hasty is a nasty, intimidating presence on the press and a big league hitter. A preseason collarbone injury and a neck injury later in the year took a toll on him last season.

Left cornerback Bobby Humphery, a burnt offering almost every week last season, now resides in LA. His spot is wide open. Tony Stargell, a third-round draft choice this year, is probably the best bet. But Anthony Parker and Michael Mayes will get looks. Speed is the base attribute of all three.

Strong safety also has a vacancy sign. Plan B signee Travis Curtis, who played for Carroll at Minnesota last year, may have the upper hand. He's on the small side, but hits big, plays the ball well and knows the system. Brian Washington has excellent size (6-1, 220) and speed (4.6), but questionable "want it." **GRADE (max. 10): 5.5**

SPECIAL TEAMS The kicking game should be solid. Pat Leahy is 39 and has lost some distance on his kickoffs, but is not a liability when you consider his accuracy in the wind-tunnel conditions at Giants Stadium. Leahy made 14 of 21 field goal attempts last year, including a 23-yarder that beat Steinberg's Patriots at the final gun.

Leftfooted punter Joe Prokop has one of the strongest legs in the NFL, although he was asked to sacrifice distance for hang time and field position last season. Prokop placed 29 of his 87 punts inside the 20 and had only four touchbacks.

Townsell finished third in the AFC in punt returns with a 9.1 average, but the Jets were not as efficient returning kickoffs, perhaps because they returned more (75) than any other team in the AFC. The kickoff return team finished 12th in the AFC with a 17.5 average. The punt coverage team was excellent; the kickoff coverage unit was poor. **GRADE (max. 10): 6.0**

COACHING/ ORGANIZATION Coslet, 43, has made a good first impression, throwing open all 22 starting jobs and telling players he wasn't going to wait for them to get in step with his new program. But how will the Bengals-style offense and Vikings-style defense fit within the framework of the Jets' personnel?

Coslet and Steinberg did not know each other until they met during the interview process last January, so there always is the potential for surprise when personnel or coaching decisions get sticky. A broader question: How will Steinberg's stake in validating his selections with the Patriots (see: Eason, Rehder, Matich) impact on Coslet's decision on whom to play?

Coslet has a mix of experience and youth on his staff. Offensive line coach Larry Beightol, 47, has bounced around the NFL, but he's a strong disciplinarian. Defensive coordinator Carroll is only 38, but he is known as an energetic coach who relates well to players. Coslet will serve as his own offensive coordinator for at least the first two years. **GRADE (max. 10): 5.5**

DRAFT Thomas is a gifted runner with superb moves and instincts, great strength for his size, and very advanced blocking and receiving skills. While he left some speed on the surgeon's table two years ago, he's still a dangerous outside runner. Rembert looks like a second-round bargain. With his gliding giant stride, he can accelerate past most pro CBs, regardless of his average 40 clockings. He has excellent hands and is fearless in traffic. Stargell looks great, plays fair. He's fast and fluid, but his coverage techniques are shoddy and his reactions sometimes seem slow. Taylor has a good chance to stick as a No. 3 QB. He has a quick, accurate arm, a great touch, and a natural "feel" for the passing game. He needs to add zip to his fastball. Savage played most of the season on a damaged ankle, and he let his weight balloon up over 300 pounds. He's a player if he drops 20. **GRADE (max. 10): 7.0**

1990 DRAFT round number (pick in round; overall sequence): 1. (3,2) BLAIR THOMAS, RB, Penn State; 2. (3,28) REGGIE REMBERT, WR, West Virginia; 3. (3,56) TONY STARGELL, DB, Tennessee State; 4. (3,84) TROY TAYLOR, QB, California; 5. (3,112) TONY SAVAGE, DT, Washington State; 5. (25,134) ROBERT McWRIGHT, DB, Texas Christian; 6. (3,140) TERANCE MATHIS, WR, New Mexico; 7. (2,167) DWAYNE WHITE, OG, Alcorn State; 7. (3,168) BASIL PROCTOR, LB, West Virginia; 8. (3,196) ROGER DUFFY, C, Penn State; 9. (3,223) DALE DAWKINS, WR, Miami; 10. (3,251) BRAD QUAST, LB, Iowa; 11. (3,279) DERRICK KELSON, DB, Purdue; 12. (3,306) DARRELL DAVIS, LB, Texas Christian.

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VETERANS ROSTER

NO.	NAME	POS.	HT.	WT.	BIRTH-DATE	COLLEGE	NFL EXP.
19	*Antrum, G.	WR	5-11	175	2/3/66	Connecticut	1
54	Benson, T.	LB	6-2	235	7/30/63	Pittsburgh	5
80	*Boyer, M.	TE	6-4	252	9/16/62	Southern Cal	6
87	Burkett, C.	WR	6-4	210	8/21/62	Jackson State	6
90	Byrd, D.	DE	6-5	270	10/5/66	Tulsa	2
66	Cadigan, D.	G-T	6-4	280	4/6/65	Southern Cal	3
59	Clifton, K.	LB	6-4	236	8/23/62	Texas Christian	7
61	Criswell, J.	T	6-7	290	3/7/64	Graceland	4
49	*Curtis, T.	S	5-10	180	9/27/65	West Virginia	4
11	Eason, T.	QB	6-4	212	10/8/59	Illinois	8
24	*Egu, P.	RB	5-11	205	2/20/67	Nevada-Reno	2
55	Gordon, A.	LB	6-5	246	9/14/64	Cincinnati	4
79	Haight, M.	G	6-4	281	10/6/62	Iowa	5
40	Hasty, J.	CB	6-0	197	5/23/65	Washington State	3
34	Hector, J.	RB	5-11	202	11/26/60	Texas A&M	8
28	Howard, C.	CB-S	6-2	190	9/20/61	Rutgers	7
57	*Kohlbrand, J.	LB	6-4	242	3/18/63	Miami (Fla.)	6
56	Lageman, J.	LB-DE	6-5	250	7/18/67	Virginia	2
5	Leahy, P.	K	6-0	196	3/19/51	St. Louis	17
93	Lyons, M.	DE-DT	6-5	269	1/15/57	Alabama	12
64	*Matich, T.	OL	6-4	270	10/9/61	Brigham Young	6
23	*Mayes, M.	CB	5-10	182	8/17/66	LSU	1
68	McElroy, R.	T	6-6	276	3/4/60	West Texas State	8
22	McMillan, E.	S	6-2	197	5/3/65	Missouri	3
92	*McNeil, E.	DT	6-3	285	6/9/67	Tennessee-Martin	1
24	McNeil, F.	RB	5-11	212	4/22/59	UCLA	10
94	Mersereau, S.	DT-DE	6-3	280	4/8/65	So. Connecticut	4
36	Miano, R.	S	6-0	200	9/3/62	Hawaii	5
72	*Miller, B.	T	6-7	300	10/2/58	Iowa	8
51	Mott, J.	LB	6-4	253	10/6/65	Iowa	2
95	Naposki, E.	LB	6-2	230	12/20/66	Connecticut	2
86	Neubert, K.	TE	6-6	248	9/13/64	Nebraska	2
77	Nichols, G.	DT-DE	6-2	267	2/10/64	Florida State	4
7	O'Brien, K.	QB	6-4	206	11/27/60	Cal-Davis	8
26	*Parker, A.	CB	5-10	181	2/11/66	Arizona State	1
17	Parker, C.	WR	6-2	201	2/5/65	Vanderbilt	3
6	Prokop, J.	P	6-2	224	7/7/60	Cal Poly-Pomona	5
25	Radachowsky, G.	S	5-11	195	9/7/62	Boston College	6
71	*Rehder, T.	T-G	6-7	280	1/27/65	Notre Dame	3
82	Shuler, M.	TE	6-3	231	8/21/56	Penn State	13
96	Stallworth, R.	DE	6-5	262	2/25/66	Auburn	2
53	Sweeney, J.	C-G	6-6	270	8/8/62	Pittsburgh	7
88	Toon, A.	WR	6-4	205	4/30/63	Wisconsin	6
83	Townsell, J.	WR	5-9	180	11/4/60	UCLA	6
43	Vick, R.	RB	6-3	235	8/11/64	Texas A&M	4
21	Washington, B.	S	6-1	220	9/10/65	Nebraska	2
97	Washington, M.	DE-DT	6-6	260	10/22/65	Idaho	2
33	Williams, T.	CB	5-11	204	10/14/65	Bethune-Cookman	3
76	Withycombe, M.	T-G	6-5	300	11/18/64	Fresno State	3
63	*Zawatson, D.	G-T	6-5	275	4/13/66	California	2

*Plan B free agent

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

1989 RECORD: 5-11 HEAD COACH: ROD RUST STADIUM: SULLIVAN (60,794)

New England made a bold draft-day move by sending the third overall choice to the Seattle Seahawks for the eighth and 10th picks, thus landing Arizona linebacker Chris Singleton and North Carolina State defensive tackle Ray Agnew. Both will help a defense that, by the end of the 1989 preseason, had lost its three best players — end Garin Veris (knee), linebacker Andre Tippett (shoulder) and cornerback Ronnie Lippett (Achilles) — to season-ending injuries. The team was effectively rendered helpless.

After finishing fourth in the AFC East, and following a Plan B debacle that saw the Pats lose 17 players, owner Victor Kiam decided to shake things up. Out went head coach Raymond Berry, who was blamed for letting young talent exit through Plan B while (over)protecting aging veterans; in came former defensive coordinator (then with Pittsburgh) Rod Rust.

The Patriots believe Rust can better teach their young, developing talent. Considering how heavily this team is relying on this year's draft, Rust better start classes soon. With ageless Steve Grogan and lifeless Marc Wilson the veteran quarterback candidates, expect LSU quarterback Tommy Hodson, a third-round pick, to be tested early. Although the front office claims Hodson won't be rushed, he'd better start cramming.

WIDE RECEIVERS/ TIGHT END

As a rookie, Hart Lee Dykes led the team's wide receivers with 49 catches for 795 yards and five touchdowns. He has good quickness for a big man (6-4, 218). However, he tends to be overly physical, pushing off defenders and risking a penalty, as well as slowing down his routes. Dykes has the talent to be a highly successful power-oriented receiver. His speed (4.6-4.65) was a concern coming out of Oklahoma State, but he accelerates well, gets in and out of his cuts and has good hands. Contract hassles and dropped passes hurt him early last season, but he was the club's main target down the stretch.

Irving Fryar had a far better year than his numbers reflect (29 catches, team-high 18.5 yard average). New England quarterbacks simply didn't get him the ball. Fryar had fewer drops than in past seasons and made some outright amazing catches. He continues to be New England's best home run threat — only San Francisco's John Taylor is more dangerous after the catch. Yet despite his explosive moves and powerful legs, Fryar has averaged only 31 catches (498 yards) over the last three seasons.

Cedric Jones, who reached career highs last season with 48 catches, 670 yards and six TDs, is the club's third receiver. He has good size, athletic ability and cuts well. Playing in the shadow of Fryar and Stanley Morgan (released in offseason), Jones has been a silent producer.

Eric Sievers (1989 Plan B, Rams) hauled in a team-high 54 passes for 615 yards. Taking advantage of the team's great outside speed, he usually drew single coverage from linebackers in three- and four-receiver sets. This year, however, expect the starting job to go to either Zeke Mowatt (Plan B, New York Giants) or second-year man Marv Cook, a solid, mobile (4.85) blocker who broke his foot last preseason. Mowatt is more complete than Sievers, but blocked poorly last season. His deep speed should keep safeties from doubling up on the wideouts. Lin Dawson has never been the same following his Super Bowl injury in 1986. He looks to be the odd man out.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.5**

OFFENSIVE LINE

This unit is undergoing a badly needed facelift. With Mike Baab, last year's starting center, now in Cleveland (Plan B), New England will move left tackle Danny Villa to center. At 6-5 and 300 pounds, Villa is surprisingly fluid, light-footed and has good body control. Without great explosion run blocking, he's more mauler than manhandler. Never a natural left tackle, he has the tools to be a good pass protector but will have to adjust to operating from the center position. He certainly provides more drive-blocking strength than Baab.

The top candidate to replace Villa at left tackle is 6-5, 300-pound David Viaene, who just might be the strongest, meanest, toughest Patriot since Hog Hannah. A genuine masher in limited areas, he hits like a runaway bulldozer. Acquired last year (Plan B) from the Houston Oilers, his major weaknesses are footwork and changing direction. Some scouts think that, with his aggressiveness, he'd make a great nose tackle. Heck, he'd make a great pro wrestler. David the Goliath.

Actually, he might wind up playing right tackle, with Bruce Armstrong moving to the left side. A far better pass blocker and superior athlete, Armstrong can play either side. He has intelligence, balance and gets into his blocks quickly. Armstrong has the strength and aggressiveness to battle the behemoths, but will sometimes use his finesse skills to a fault, struggling against big, power-oriented defensive linemen. A neglected Pro Bowl talent, nagging injuries slowed him last season.

Left guard Sean Farrell had a Pro Bowl season, but was robbed of his trip to Hawaii, too. With all the 3-4's in the AFC, he takes full advantage of going uncovered, using his quickness and speed (not the 4.7 of old, but still under 5.0) to fire out on linebackers. He pulls extremely well and makes impeccable decisions turning the corner. He sustains his blocks, doesn't lunge and stays off the ground. He'll yield some ground to bull rushers, and has never been a durable player, but he's highly intelligent, talented and gives Rust a coach on the field.

Right guard Ron Wooten is attempting to rebound from neck surgery that caused him to miss all of the 1989 season. If Wooten, a smart technician with marginal athletic ability, isn't ready, Paul Fairchild, who spent most of last year as the No. 1 right guard, will likely get the call. Problem is, the more he plays, the worse he looks. He doesn't deal well with men over him, and wears down as a run blocker.

Damian Johnson is listed at tackle, but could wind up battling Wooten or Fairchild for a spot in the lineup. Johnson (Plan B), a former starter for the Giants, is big, tough and active but must overcome nagging back problems.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.5**

QUARTERBACK

Marc Wilson was the last of four Patriots starters in 1989, following Tony Eason (now with the Jets), Doug Flutie (released) and Steve Grogan (still here). This season, he'll have to survive camp challenges by rookies, free agents, waiver pickups — anyone who applies.

After sitting out the 1988 campaign, Wilson had the strongest arm of the group, which isn't saying much. He's bright and has enough ability to make the team respectable, but lacks the fire and consistency to take charge of the offense. He's an adequate backup, but his headliner days are long gone. Last year, Wilson won only one of his four starts, completed 50 percent of his passes for 1,006 yards and three touchdowns, and tossed five interceptions.

After a near-miraculous comeback from neck surgery, Grogan had a 2-4 starting record. He brings more savvy than sizzle, but at 37 is here to buy the scouting department a little more time.

GRADE (max. 10): **4.0**

RUNNING BACKS

After a brilliant '88 rookie year, last season injuries and marital problems get the best of John Stephens; the Patriots got the rest. Stephens was disappointing, inconsistent and displayed neither his 1988 abandon nor his Pro Bowl 1,168 yards (3.9 per carry). In 1989, he rushed for 833 yards (3.4).

He was also hurt. A thigh bruise during training camp kept him out of most of the preseason, then it was an ankle

Hart Lee Dykes

in the season-opener, the neck against San Francisco and, finally, a season-ending hip pointer. When his subtle cutting ability went, so did he. When everything is right, he can find success inside or outside. He has a fullback's body (6-1, 215) with a tailback's speed and athletic ability. He doesn't possess great in-line quickness, but tacklers know he's no plodder. His pass patterns are crude, but he has great feet and explodes upfield. If the rave reviews of his minicamp are an accurate harbinger, fans could once again enjoy vintage (1988) Stephens.

Speaking of things to come, fullback Robert Perryman's no-show at minicamp looked like a future contract holdout. An underrated performer, Perryman is an attacking blocker who hounds linebackers. As a ballcarrier, he gives new meaning to north-south running; he's more north pole-south pole. That straight-line style is handy, though, when it comes to picking up the tough, short yards. He's also adept catching the ball on swing passes, and had 29 receptions in '89.

Mosi Tatupu's 13-year career has long outlived the mortality tables for running backs. Jamie Morris (Plan B, Washington) lacks breakaway speed and avoidability, but could be a plus on passing downs. George Adams (Plan B,

Giants) is a big, skilled back with possibilities and a bad hip. The Patriots are high on Marvin Allen, a skillful runner with the ability to burst through a hole or take it 90 degrees down the line. He's young and can catch, but hasn't stayed healthy. **GRADE** (max. 10): **6.0**

DEFENSIVE LINE Without Garin Veris, a dominant player at right end, and pass-rushing linebacker Andre Tippett, the Patriots managed a lukewarm 31 sacks and finished 17th in run defense. When healthy, the defense has the talent to be effective in Rust's 3-4 sets.

Veris has apparently recovered from reconstructive knee surgery and will be used more as a situational player this season. He lacks the strength to be a real run stuffer, especially in New England's two-gap schemes, but his quickness and unparalleled instincts keep most tackles from firing out too fast. Despite his need to play more physical, he's a good tackler with outstanding range. He's a tremendous athlete and a team leader.

Starting in Veris' place last season, Brent Williams registered a team-high eight sacks and led the line in tackles. He has the strength and quickness to develop into an all-around defender, and can play anywhere on the line. An improving player, he needs to develop more moves rushing the passer and take fewer downs off.

After a strong rookie season in '88, nose tackle Tim Goad was greeted by a constant flow of double-teams in '89. His performance, therefore, wasn't as noticeable, but the respect given this developing player was obvious. Quick off the ball, Goad explodes into the gaps and pursues well. At times, he can be overmatched against the power-oriented guards, and his footwork is average, but he works hard and has good instincts. Most important, Goad excels at keeping blockers off the inside linebackers. The pass rush he flashed in college has yet to materialize in the pros; he chalked up his lone '89 sack in the 15th week.

Left end Ken Sims came back from an Achilles injury and re-established himself as a solid run stacker. He provides some power-rush push, but overall is a non-factor when it comes to getting to the quarterback. In his 74 NFL games, Sims has just 18 sacks (3.9 per 16 games). But after back, hip and leg injuries, he may no longer have what it takes to turn it loose. Not a great competitor, he played hard last season, kept his feet and was fairly consistent.

Well-preserved Gary Jeter, a 14-year veteran, looks like he's 25 years old. He didn't play bad, either. Injuries forced this pass-rushing specialist into base defense duty, where he not only held his own but notched a sack in seven of 14 games. Chris Gannon (Plan B, San Diego) is an active player who gets pushed around at the point.
GRADE (max. 10): **5.5**

LINEBACKERS Andre Tippett, expected to fully recover from major shoulder surgery, is 30 years old and hasn't played a full season since 1985. The club's marquee talent, Tippett is a dominating big-play maker and is as effective a down pass rusher as he is standing. Last season, New England sorely missed his strongside pressure; he's averaged 12 sacks a season since 1983. Tippett has explosive strength and quickness, both at the point and in charging upfield. He plays with tremendous leverage and should register his strong hands as weapons.

New England's inside guys had good years. Ed Reynolds really went to work when Tippett went down, racking up a team-high 141 tackles in his second season as a starter. He is extremely tough taking on people at the point of attack. Big and strong enough to play off blockers, he uses experience, aggressiveness and intelligence to find the football, though he doesn't always wrap up the ballcarrier. A stiff, high-cut player with long arms and legs, he relies on anticipation and smelling out the action. Without the speed to be a factor in pass defense, Reynolds is a vital run-stuffing force and quarterback of the defense.

Vincent Brown and Johnny Rembert are more talented players. Brown is the team's best hitter. This year, he'll line up opposite Reynolds, since New England simply must get Brown on the field. He is a deluxe run stopper and owns one of the league's nastiest forearms. He has sideline range and proved he can find the backfield (4 sacks) last season when he filled in as a weakside rusher. But Brown — tabbed "The Undertaker" for obvious reasons — is best attacking from the inside.

Rembert finished third on the team (122 stops) and also filled the outside void left by Don Blackmon's retirement. A decent blitzer, Rembert is better in pursuit. He's versatile enough to play inside or out, but should wind up on the weak side. All he needs is more consistency and fewer concentration lapses.

Fourth-year outsider Tim Jordan is the team's best man-coverage 'backer but can't get it done at the point. He plays tentatively, doesn't blitz well and, though he's up to 235, is too frail. Undersized, athletic Richard Harvey (Plan B, Buffalo) and oversized (6-6), stiff run clogger Bruce Scholtz provide depth. **GRADE** (max. 10): **5.5**

DEFENSIVE BACKS The good news for the Patriots' secondary is that Ronnie Lippett, their best defensive back, appears to be headed for a complete recovery from the ruptured Achilles' tendon that sidelined him all of last year. Without Lippett last season, and without a pass rush, the Patriots slipped from third to 23rd in pass defense. Raymond Clayborn, who had a decent year, is gone via Plan B (Cleveland) while questions remain if Lippett (5-11, 180) has the durability to survive his own aggressive style.

Lippett has to play in-your-face to be effective. He's a tough run supporter at the right corner, with good feet, good plant, drive and close. He doesn't know how to lay back, and doesn't have deep catch-up speed. If he loses even a half-step following his injury, he could be in for serious coverage problems. Of greater concern is whether or not he'll ever be durable enough to establish himself as a top-flight defender.

Replacing Lippett last season was Maurice Hurst, a fourth-round pick from Southern University. He had an exceptional rookie campaign, started 14 games and finished with a team-high five interceptions, returning one for a touchdown. Hurst is a nimble athlete with great recovery skills, quickness, change of direction and leaping ability. A former wide receiver, he has exceptional hands. Although he was inconsistent at times, especially in man-coverage, his techniques and play recognition were solid. He was not a great hitter in college, but proved he would tackle in the pros. As the club's left corner this season, he'd better get used to forcing the run.

New England is stuck with a pair of declining safeties. Age has robbed the speed and athletic skills from Roland James, who last season continued his three-year slide at strong safety. He can't run anymore (4.7-4.8) and is no longer a physical player. He is smart and a sure tackler, though. He is also extremely vulnerable in man-to-man coverage; if you're a pass-catching running back, look forward to a big day.

Free safety Fred Marion survives almost solely on intelligence. After playing at a Pro Bowl level in 1988, his play dropped dramatically in 1989. He continues to be outstanding at reading keys and getting a great jump, but he simply can't run anymore. His hitting and tackling fell way off. He'll be challenged by Eric Coleman and Tony Zackery, a good-size (6-2, 200), good-speed (4.5) second-year player out of Washington (Plan B, Atlanta) who can play either safety.

If Coleman, slated as the nickel back, shows improvement in training camp, he could put Marion on the sidelines. Injured (hamstring) in last year's preseason, he was forced into action prematurely and struggled. Not a natural cover guy, receivers often broke down his cushion, then beat him at the break point. Coleman didn't react nor turn-and-go well, but he was never beaten by more than a step. A tremendous leaper with good hands, he has good speed and will hit. With health and more consistency, he should turn into a good player. Journeyman corner Ernest Gibson (Plan B, Miami) brings first-hand knowledge of Rust's system. **GRADE** (max. 10): **5.0**

SPECIAL TEAMS Former Patriot Jason Staurovsky rejoined the team with seven weeks remaining in the season, hit 14 of 17 field goals and may have found a home...again. With four field goals beyond 40 yards, his leg seemed stronger. Third-year punter Jeff Feagles will have to convince coaches he's capable of better numbers (38 gross, 31.3 net) if he plans on sticking around. New England special teams were the height of mediocrity, finishing eighth in the AFC in kickoff coverage, punt return and ninth in punt coverage. Led by Sammy Martin's 24.3 average, the Pats were an AFC-second (to Pittsburgh) in kickoff returns (21.3). **GRADE** (max. 10): **4.5**

COACHING/ ORGANIZATION Rust will place much more importance on player development than Berry, who signed his walking papers when he overruled the scouting department and protected Fairchild, Morgan, Grogan and Jeter instead of Baab, Clayborn and Rodney Rice. However, no one, not even veterans, would accuse Rust's defensive system of being overly simple. Once the Steelers caught on, they were among the NFL's best defenders. Some ex-Patriots (Plan B; Zackery, Gannon, Gibson) should help with the transition.

General manager Pat Sullivan promoted Joe Mendes to director of player development after Dick Steinberg left to become GM of the New York Jets. Mendes has learned from the best — Steinberg — and is considered by some to be a young Bobby Beathard. **GRADE** (max. 10): **5.0**

DRAFT Singleton is a great athlete with size (6-2, 247), blitz and cover capabilities. Agnew has the strength and raw quickness to play either nose or end. The two provide much-needed defensive help.

Hodson, though, could have been the steal. Playing on a poor LSU team, with an even worse offensive line, Hodson had a Marino-like (poor) senior season. He also endured one of college football's toughest crowds, which may come in handy if he gets thrown into the fire in New England, home of some brutal critics. Hodson has a good arm, quick release, timing and could become a fine medium-range passer. McMurtry isn't a blazer but has good hands, size, strength and enough go-go to keep corners honest. A former linebacker, Melander (280 at minicamp) runs well and has a good wingspan, but lacks the pop to punish anyone at the point. Robinson could be a nickel candidate at corner or free safety (4.48 before draft), while Gray is a Stephens-style back sans the flat-out wheels.
GRADE (max. 10): **7.5**

1990 DRAFT round number (pick in round; overall sequence): 1. (10,8) CHRIS SINGLETON, LB, Arizona; 1. (12,10) RAY AGNEW, DE, North Carolina State; 3. (6,59) TOMMY HODSON, QB, Louisiana State; 3. (27,80) GREG McMURTRY, WR, Michigan; 5. (1,110) JUNIOR ROBINSON, DB, East Carolina; 5. (4,113) JON MELANDER, OT, Minnesota; 5. (11,120) JAMES GRAY, RB, Texas Tech; 9. (6,226) SHAWN BOUWENS, OG, Nebraska Wesleyan; 10. (5,253) ANTHONY LANDRY, RB, Stephen F. Austin; 11. (4,280) SEAN SMITH, DE, Georgia Tech; 12. (6,309) VENTSON DONELSON, DB, Michigan State; 12. (19,322) BLAINE ROSE, OG, Maryland.

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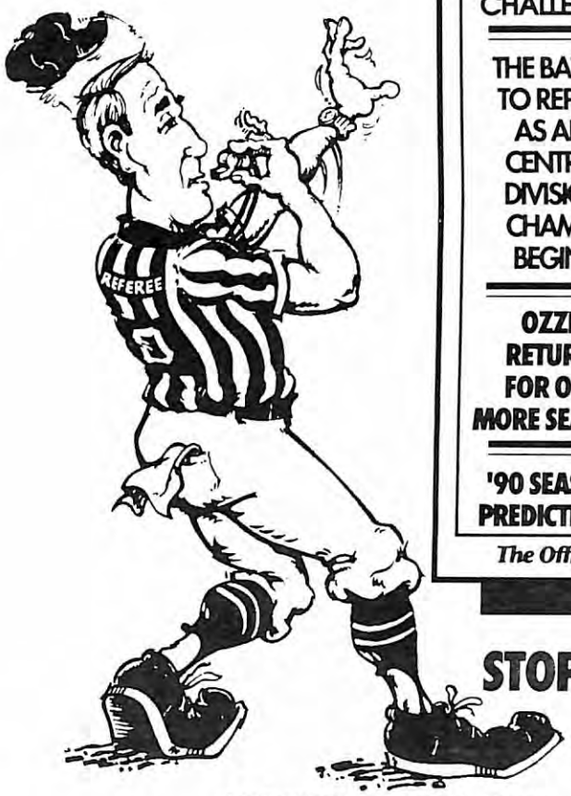
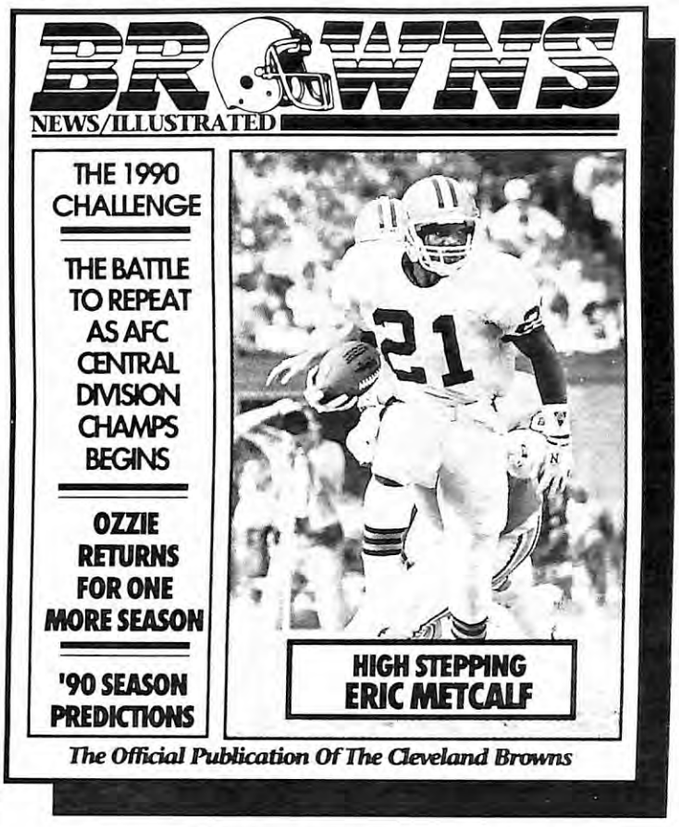
VETERANS ROSTER

NO.	NAME	POS.	HT.	WT.	BIRTH-DATE	COLLEGE	NFL EXP.
33	*Adams, G.	RB	6-1	230	12/22/62	Kentucky	5
78	Armstrong, B.	T	6-4	284	9/7/65	Louisville	4
28	Bowman, J.	SS	6-2	218	10/26/63	Central Michigan	6
59	Brown, V.	LB	6-2	245	1/9/65	Miss. Valley State	3
22	Coleman, E.	CB	6-0	190	12/27/66	Wyoming	2
46	Cook, M.	TE	6-4	242	2/24/66	Iowa	2
87	Dawson, L.	TE	6-3	245	6/24/59	N.C. State	9
67	Douglas, D.	G	6-4	280	3/20/63	Tennessee	5
88	Dykes, H.	WR	6-4	218	9/2/66	Oklahoma State	2
66	Fairchild, P.	G	6-4	275	9/14/61	Kansas	7
62	Farrell, S.	G	6-3	265	5/25/60	Penn State	9
80	Fryar, I.	WR	6-0	195	9/28/62	Nebraska	7
76	*Gambol, C.	T	6-6	295	9/4/64	Iowa	2
43	*Gibson, E.	CB	5-10	175	10/3/61	Furman	7
72	Goad, T.	NT	6-3	263	2/28/66	North Carolina	3
14	Grogan, S.	QB	6-4	210	7/24/53	Kansas State	16
10	Hansen, B.	K	6-4	220	10/26/60	Sioux Falls	6
58	*Harvey, R.	LB	6-1	235	9/11/66	Tulane	1
37	Hurst, M.	CB	5-10	180	9/17/67	Southern U.	2
38	James, R.	SS	6-2	191	2/18/58	Tennessee	11
99	Jeter, G.	DE	6-4	265	1/24/55	Southern Cal	14
68	*Johnson, D.	T	6-5	290	12/18/62	Kansas State	5
83	Jones, C.	WR	6-1	177	6/1/60	Duke	9
93	Jordan, T.	LB	6-3	235	4/26/64	Wisconsin	4
42	Lippett, R.	CB	5-11	181	12/10/60	Miami (Fla.)	7
31	Marion, F.	FS	6-2	191	1/2/59	Miami (Fla.)	9
82	Martin, S.	WR	5-11	175	8/21/65	LSU	3
23	McSwain, R.	CB	6-1	197	1/28/62	Clemson	7
24	*Morris, J.	RB	5-7	188	6/6/65	Michigan	3
81	*Mowatt, Z.	TE	6-3	240	3/5/61	Florida State	7
34	Perryman, R.	RB	6-1	233	10/16/64	Michigan	4
52	Rembert, J.	LB	6-3	245	1/19/61	Clemson	8
95	Reynolds, E.	LB	6-5	242	9/23/61	Virginia	8
51	Scholtz, B.	LB	6-6	244	9/26/58	Texas	9
85	Sievers, E.	TE	6-4	235	11/9/57	Maryland	10
77	Sims, K.	DE	6-5	275	10/31/59	Texas	9
4	Staurovsky, J.	K	5-9	168	3/23/63	Tulsa	4
44	Stephens, J.	RB	6-1	215	2/23/66	Northwestern St. (La.)	3
30	Tatupu, M.	RB	6-0	227	4/28/55	Southern Cal	13
45	Timpson, M.	WR	5-10	175	6/6/67	Penn State	2
56	Tippett, A.	LB	6-3	248	12/27/59	Iowa	8
21	Tucker, E.	CB	5-8	170	7/6/64	Utah	3
60	Veris, G.	DE	6-4	255	2/27/63	Stanford	5
70	*Viaene, D.	T	6-5	298	7/14/65	Minnesota-Duluth	2
75	Villa, D.	C-T	6-5	300	9/21/64	Arizona State	4
65	*White, B.	C	6-5	285	4/9/63	Rhode Island	4
96	Williams, B.	NT-DE	6-4	275	10/23/64	Toledo	5
54	Williams, E.	LB	6-4	244	9/8/61	Texas	6
15	Wilson, M.	QB	6-5	208	2/15/57	Brigham Young	10
61	Wooten, R.	G	6-4	273	6/28/59	North Carolina	9

*Plan B free agent

TIME OUT





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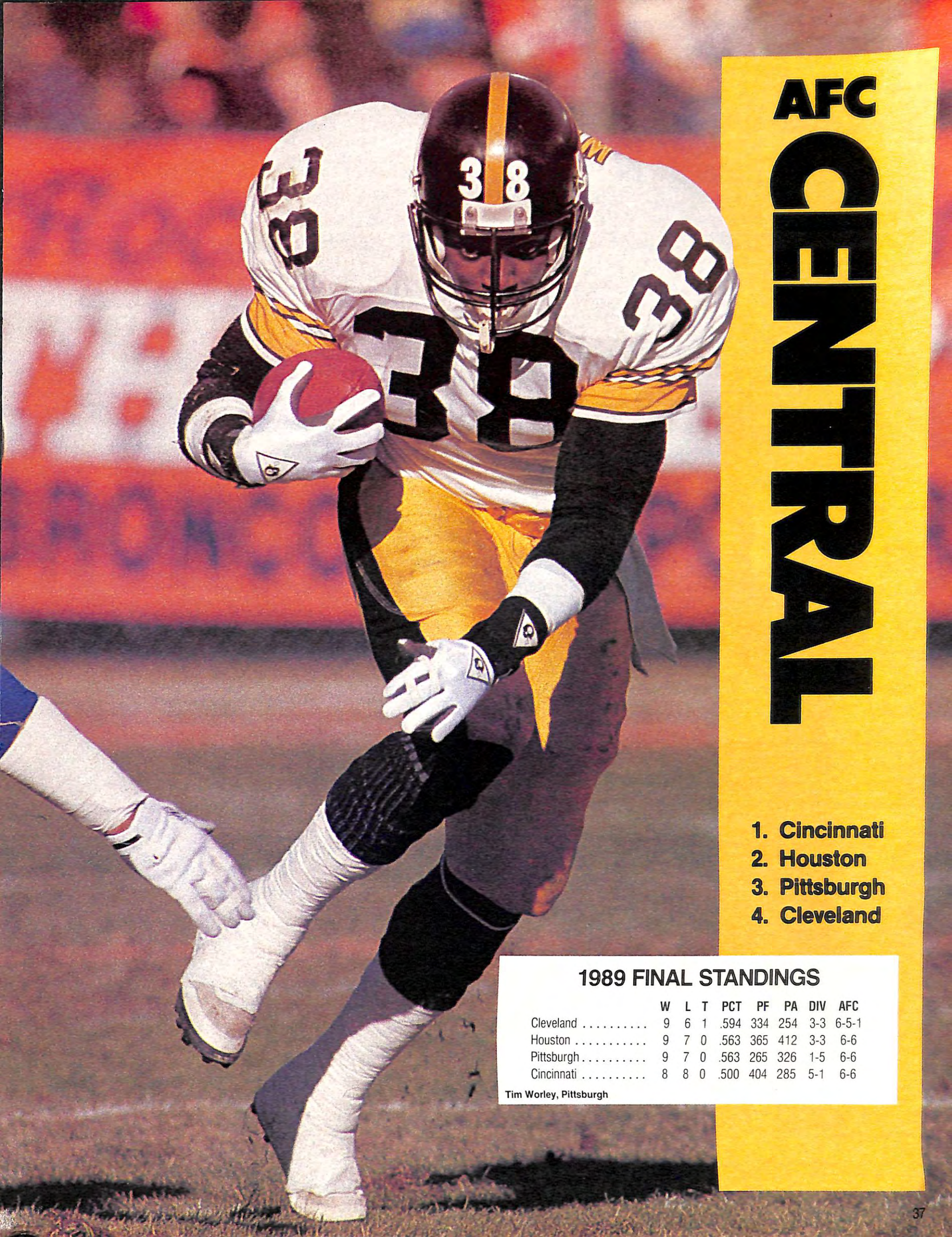


AFC CENTRAL

1. Cincinnati
2. Houston
3. Pittsburgh
4. Cleveland

1989 FINAL STANDINGS

	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA	DIV	AFC
Cleveland	9	6	1	.594	334	254	3-3	6-5-1
Houston	9	7	0	.563	365	412	3-3	6-6
Pittsburgh	9	7	0	.563	265	326	1-5	6-6
Cincinnati	8	8	0	.500	404	285	5-1	6-6

Tim Worley, Pittsburgh

CINCINNATI BENGALS

1989 RECORD: 8-8 HEAD COACH: SAM WYCHE STADIUM: RIVERFRONT (59,755)

The Bengals' slide from AFC Central first to worst was not as traumatizing as one might expect. Injuries and Plan B took a toll on a team that had come within one Joe Montana touchdown drive of beating San Francisco in Super Bowl XXIII. The starting backfield was torn apart when fullback Ickey Woods was forced to undergo major reconstructive knee surgery. Despite losing more than 1,000 yards and 15 touchdowns from their offense — catastrophic for most teams — the Bengals still possessed enough firepower to score 404 points, fourth in the league.

But it was the team's inconsistency that cost them, long before a final-game loss to Minnesota eliminated Cincinnati from a wild card playoff entry. The Bengals were limited to 17 points or less six times, not surprisingly going 0-6 in those games. Defensively, the Bengals allowed 44 fewer points last season and limited opponents to 17 points or less eight times, going 7-1 in those games.

The consensus around the NFL is that Cincinnati has more talent than any team in the AFC. Starters perhaps; depth, no. Once again, injuries are the primary threat to scratch the 'Cats from the postseason field.

WIDE RECEIVERS/ TIGHT END

When it comes to NFL receivers, Eddie Brown and Tim McGee are as dangerous as any pair in the league. Last season it was McGee who produced the eye-popping statistics.

McGee (65 for 1,211 yards, 8 TDs, 18.6 average) established career highs in every key category, almost doubling his previous best for yardage. McGee's speed and sneaky quick cuts are the foundation to his effective head and shoulder fakes. He'll take the tough shots over the middle, find the soft spots between zones and make things happen after the catch. Physical cornerbacks will try to overpower him at the line, knock him off his routes and force him to beat them deep. Easier said than done.

Speaking of deep routes, Brown averaged a gaudy 24 yards per catch in 1988 (53 for 1,273, 9 TDs), then saw his average per catch drop by 8.3 yards last season. Cornerbacks, out of fear and respect, practically lined up in the next county. Double coverage and a contract holdout also slowed Brown (52 for 814, 6 TDs), who's never been known for his consistency. He'll drop easy passes, and contrary to popular belief, does not have blazing deep speed. What he has is great acceleration, and a strong arm-over move to free himself at the line. A bit bigger than McGee, he's a physical blocker.

Depth? What depth? Mike Martin is an average player and a better return man. Kendal Smith has good hands/ quickness, but enters just his second season. Mike Barber is a Plan B free agent (Houston).

Tight end Rodney Holman, who moves to the slot on most third-down situations, won't help the backups get much playing time. Ask those on the AFC Central circuit and they'll say they have the best tight end in the business. Philadelphia's Keith Jackson (10.3 avg., 3 TDs) and the Rams' Pete Holohan (10.0, 2 TDs) were the closest rivals to Holman's whopping 14.7-yard average and nine TDs (51 receptions), all career highs. Coming off his second consecutive Pro Bowl, Holman is a super-smooth performer with excellent hands, good speed and precise patterns. He's a master weaving his way crossfield on play-action. As a blocker, he uses superior positioning and body control to occupy linebackers and free up James Brooks, and he's underrated in-line. Backup Eric Kattus is a tenacious blocker.

GRADE (max. 10): **8.0**

OFFENSIVE LINE

Jim McNally, the Bengals' line coach, should take a bow. Year in and year out, the Bengals line ranks among the NFL's best. The names may change, but not the effectiveness. Of the five starters last season, only All-Pro tackle Anthony Munoz was drafted higher than the seventh round as the Bengals once again led the NFL in rushing, finishing third in total offense. The backs averaged 4.7 yards per carry, second in the league.

Not that there are no new worlds to conquer. Over the last two years, Cincinnati has lost one starter and two quality backups to Plan B. This season, they must replace right guard Max Montoya, a three-time Pro Bowl selection who signed with the Raiders. Brian Blados, a former No. 1 pick and supersub, is the heir apparent. The versatile one could wind up at guard or tackle, depending on right tackle Joe Walter's ongoing recovery from reconstructive knee surgery. If Walter continues to struggle, his move inside would put Blados at tackle. Blados is strong, tough and smart. He has fairly good feet and can pancake on run blocking, but doesn't have the quickness to turn the corner. He relies on a good pass setup, since quicker ends take advantage of his limited mobility, tangle his feet and beat him to the outside. That's why coaches hope Walter can manage at tackle.

Until he suffered the knee injury late in the 1988 season, Walter was a prime-time pass protector. The 6-6 Walter had learned to use his long arms and massive frame to keep ends from getting inside or outside of him. Never that quick afoot, he was nevertheless very smooth dropping back to protect the passer. Even though he made a gallant return from the knee injury, his mobility was severely hindered last season. He still can fire out for run blocking, give a powerful punch and engulf his man, but the quick drop disappeared. Perhaps another season will bring him closer to 100 percent.

Opposite Walter is Munoz, the Canton-bound standard by which all other tackles are measured. Munoz has been to so many Pro Bowls he should have a second home in Honolulu by now; last year was his ninth in a row. At 32, Munoz still has those extraordinarily smooth, quick feet. He gains optimum positioning after retreating from his cockeyed stance, and rarely is fooled or caught off-balance. Although he is 6-6, he manages to stay low enough to get good leverage, and knows how to use his hands and get inside the pads. Earlier in his career, Munoz was a paralyzing run blocker. Now, while still better than most, he's had to sacrifice some weight to retain his quickness.

Playing next to Munoz is Bruce Reimers, a 6-7 concrete block who can flatten people on the run. With the temperament of a defensive lineman, Reimers isn't capable nor interested in dazzling you with fancy footwork. On pass protection, his main weapon is time — the time it takes defenders to run around his long arms and 280 pounds. He's not going to make nifty adjustments on the fly, but when it comes to blocking in space, he's a man-mountain.

At 6-4, center Bruce Kozerski is the "short" man on the Bengals line. For a cerebral type capable of playing all three line positions, Kozerski is not above brawling. When he gets a guy on his back, he'll pummel him until the whistle. Quick and agile, he has strong legs for drive blocking and uses his hands well on pass protection. He has good punch techniques and redirects nicely.

The Bengals are hoping depth won't become an issue. With two rookies from last season — converted tight end Scott Jones and plodding Ken Moyer — still developing, injuries to the starters could be devastating.

GRADE (max. 10): **8.0**

QUARTERBACK

For the second straight year, Boomer Esiason (258 of 455, 3,525 yards, 28 TDs, 11 interceptions) led the AFC in quarterback rating (92.1). His statistics were comparable to his Super Bowl season, but without the results. Esiason excels at running Wyche's semi-huddle and hurry-up offense, reads defenses exceptionally well, and feasts on zone defenses. His play-action fakes paralyze linebackers, who subsequently suffer the wrath of a Boomer fastball or off-speed pitch that finds its receiver. His release is second only to Dan Marino, his competitiveness second to none. He's tapped his once-raging emotions and transformed them into experienced leadership. He's big and strong enough to take a beating, and can run for the crucial yards (5.9 avg. the past two seasons; 4.6 career). At times, he will overthrow and lose accuracy, particularly to his backs. Then again, he probably forgets to fold his laundry every night, too. The worst thing a defense can do with Esiason is give him familiar looks. He'll make them pay.

Southpaw Erik Wilhelm, who threw only 56 passes as a rookie, showed maturity, a smooth motion, touch and accuracy. Despite suspect arm strength, he's developed quickly and earned the No. 2 spot.

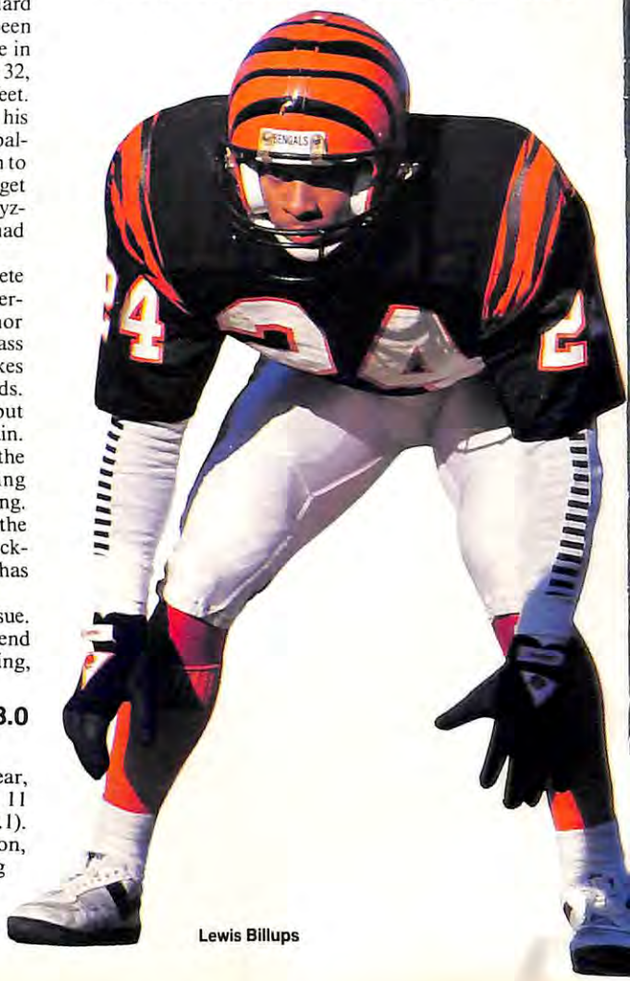
GRADE (max. 10): **8.0**

RUNNING BACKS

The "Ickey Shuffle" went the way of the jitterbug last season when fullback Ickey Woods tore up his knee early in the season. The Bengals are optimistic about his recovery but realize that half an Ickey would be better than no Ickey at all.

As a rookie, Woods showed great quickness and instincts for a big, powerful back. He can explode through holes. Until he regains quickness, strength from his thighs and upper body should get him by. Woods has enough slashing, darting moves to make people miss, and is a good pass receiver, a facet that might be utilized more fully until he returns to top form.

While Woods was on crutches, halfback James Brooks



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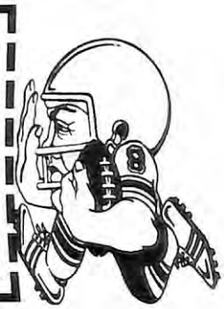

was having the time of his life. At 31, he rushed for a club-record 1,239 yards, averaged 5.6 yards per carry and scored seven touchdowns. As a runner, Brooks doesn't have blazing speed but is as tough as nails, and has equally piercing quickness. Brooks put it best himself: "Trying to hit me is like trying to hit a curveball." With his great instincts and vision, he never misses the hole and cannot be intimidated. The bigger the game, the harder he plays. He has exceptional hands and often lines up as a receiver, something he takes every bit as serious as packing the football. As durable as he is productive, he hauled in 37 passes and two scores last season.

Rookie Eric Ball replaced Woods and gained 391 yards. He has a strong upper body, massive legs, good body lean and explosive quickness both out of his stance and into the hole. He has plenty to learn, and must show better durability. Stanford Jennings is a seven-year veteran with some acceleration, but the Bengals might go more with Paul Palmer, a Plan B free agent who catches well and excels on kickoff returns. Sleeper Craig Taylor, a sixth-round pick last year, is an elusive short-yardage runner who scored five touchdowns. **GRADE** (max. 10): **7.5**

DEFENSIVE LINE The Bengals finished seventh in points allowed and 15th in defense — not bad for a team that couldn't stop the run or rush the passer. Cincinnati was 26th in run defense and yielded an NFL-worst 4.5 yards per carry. Tied for 21st with 33 sacks, this group is small, finesse-oriented and more read-and-react than rowdy.

Nose tackle Tim Krumrie is the best here. After leading the team in tackles for four consecutive years, Krumrie was not as effective following the severely broken leg he suffered in Super Bowl XXIII. As the season went on, he showed signs of regaining his confidence and some of his quickness. In the Bengals' scheme, he is not a sacrificial lamb designated solely to tie up blockers and free linebackers. What makes Krumrie special is his lateral, sideline to-sideline range. A former wrestler, he uses his hands well and explodes off the line. He's strong but lacks the bulk to be a consistent power rusher.

Jason Buck (264) and Jim Skow (250) are undersized ends, better at charging upfield than playing the point. Buck, who led the team with only six sacks, is a speed guy with good quickness and feet. He often loses leverage, which not only stymies his pass rush but kills his already average run-stopping capability. Like Skow, he has a good rip and spin move. Skow was superb in 1988, got off to a great start in '89, then tailed off before a shoulder injury sent him to the sidelines late in the season. Skow looks like an outside linebacker. Even though he is strong for his size, that hardly matters when you're dancing with grizzly bears. He's quick off the mark, reads and adjusts well and is getting better against the run.

At 6-6, 270, end Skip McClendon looks like he belongs on this team's offensive line. McClendon will knock down a pass or two, but lacks the quickness to pressure. Although he has the body to stuff the run, he doesn't take on tackles that well. David Grant is a capable backup for Krumrie and has enough fire pass rushing to spot the ends. Mike Hammerstein is more tenacious than talented, but has a nose for the ball. **GRADE** (max. 10): **5.0**

LINEBACKERS If another veteran cannot fill the leadership void left by the retirement of city councilman Reggie Williams, the Bengals could be in trouble.

The most talented is right inside linebacker Joe Kelly. Although he's more of an active, finesse player who relies on quickness and pursuit, Kelly still packs a punch for a 227-pounder. He talks a big game and is a reliable tackler, but can be overpowered at the point and doesn't make that many plays up in the line. A four-year starter on the inside, the former No. 1 pick could be moved outside if a capable replacement for Williams is not found. He has the speed and has improved his coverage.

Carl Zander, the other inside 'backer, had one of his best seasons. He doesn't have Kelly's tools but is smart, sniffs out plays and reacts well. While Zander won't make many headlines, he runs well and showed better range last season. He's steady versus the run, whether it's knowing when to lower a shoulder against guards or protecting his legs from cut blocks. He's fairly fluid in coverage. Although he does very little that is outstanding, he's a well-rounded, productive player.

The best big-play *potential* resides in Leon White. His talent is more hidden than exhibited. From his left outside spot, White has the size (6-2, 236) and speed (4.6) for blitzing or coverage. Yet he's just an average player who will string out the run and grade out OK. Slow reactions (in coverage) and sloppy techniques (in blitzing) have prevented him from blossoming. Agile and hostile, he still has a chance.

Kevin Walker will take Williams' spot; whether he fills his shoes is another matter. Walker was impressive as a 1988 third-round pick until a knee injury shelved him in the sixth game. Last season he failed to push Williams and took part in only 11 tackles. After handing him the job, coaches hope Walker's mobility and instincts will resurface. At Maryland, he looked like a thoroughbred run stopper who eventually would pick up coverage skills. If he doesn't pan out, they might try him inside.

But that's not where Cincy needs help. The Bengals desperately need outside people, but their best reserves are insiders Ed Brady (good hitter, deep snapper) and Leo Barker (decent pass coverage).

GRADE (max. 10): **5.5**

DEFENSIVE BACKS This secondary majors in hard hits and big plays. Yet the hardest hit may have come in May, when star cornerback Eric Thomas suffered a season-ending knee injury playing in a pick-up basketball game. That not only breaks up one of the AFC's premier cornerback duos (with Lewis Billups) — second only to Kansas City's Albert Lewis and Kevin Ross — but exposes the Bengals' lack of corner depth. If help doesn't arrive, Cincinnati's most important shuffle won't involve Ickey.

Rickey Dixon, a former No. 1 corner mired behind Thomas and Billips, turned into an outstanding free safety, instead. He is a logical candidate to move to Thomas' corner. When offenses brought in multiple-receiver sets, Dixon displayed his corner-like recovery speed, quickness and footwork. What he lacks in pattern recognition he makes up for in raw ability. Dixon runs like a deer and has great range; he was perhaps the fastest safety in the league. Because he's not a natural centerfielder, he doesn't anticipate well, nor does he get the great jump; he picked off only three passes. Second on the team in tackles, he's always looking for the big hit. He may soon be one himself, if left at safety.

Billips and Thomas are cocky, in-your-face corners who like to challenge receivers. They are more comfortable pressing than lying back in zones. Because they spend so much time running with receivers and with their backs to the quarterback, neither get a lot of interceptions. Billips continues to improve his coverage techniques and gets a good, quick jam at the line. He's fast and comes up hard against the run. Better concentration has made him more consistent, though he'll get sucked in by double-move routes.

At 235, David Fulcher is the star attraction. A real load, he went to his second straight Pro Bowl after leading the team in tackles (107) and interceptions (8). Fact is, he's bigger, stronger and faster than any of the Cincinnati linebackers, and could play over the center if he wanted. Great strength, balance and anticipation make him a devastating run defender. He can stuff the tight end, but would rather blitz. Although he runs well, Cincinnati tries to protect him from isolated one-on-one situations. He's better in zones, where he can read the action and intimidate receivers. He causes dropped balls the minute he trots onto the field.

If Dixon returns to the corner, Solomon Wilcots could reclaim his former starting free safety spot. He's smallish but smart, and plays better in zones than man. Strong safety Barney Bussey lacks speed but adds thump to nickel situations. **GRADE** (max. 10): **6.5**

SPECIAL TEAMS Camp phenom Jim Gallery crumbled when regular season crunch time came. So it was welcome back (Jim) Breech, who had been waived earlier. Breech has limited field goal range, but is consistent. Punter Lee Johnson, who is not consistent, stays on the payroll by doubling as the kickoff man.

An overall lack of roster depth usually translates into poor special teams. That certainly holds true in Cincinnati. In the AFC, both Bengals return teams ranked last while coverage units finished last (kickoffs) and 11th (punts).

GRADE (max. 10): **4.0**

COACHING/ ORGANIZATION With the Brown family still calling the shots, Cincinnati went to two Super Bowls in the last decade. Once again, they've assembled enough new talent to challenge, though some defensive linemen and linebackers would help.

Head coach Sam Wyche is a no-nonsense guy, intelligent and innovative, tough and demanding, motivational and player-oriented. He also drew national attention when he grabbed the stadium PA, chastised his own fans for throwing things on the field and made deprecatory remarks about the city of Cleveland. On another occasion, he refused to allow the media into his postgame dressing room, a decision that hit him right in the pocketbook. Then he ran up the score in a 61-7 massacre of Houston and blasted Oilers coach Jerry Glanville in a way unheard of in NFL coaching circles. Hey, no one ever said he was boring. **GRADE** (max. 10): **8.0**

DRAFT "You draft for need and don't let anyone tell you differently," says Paul Brown. Nevertheless, scouts are split on whether Francis will fill the Bengals need for a pass-rushing, impact linebacker. While some were surprised Francis lasted until the 12th pick, others question his attitude, blitzing strike and consistency. At times, he plays tough at the point; other times he seems to be looking for a soft place to fall.

Cincy's prize pick may be Green, whose stock dropped following mediocre clockings and a history of nagging injuries. He's a slashing runner with soft hands. Clark has limited range and looks like a linebacking reach in the third round. With additional bulk, Brennan has good potential at tackle. He was one of three offensive linemen taken to replenish a roster depleted by Plan B.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.5**

1990 DRAFT round number (pick in round; overall sequence): 1. (14,12) JAMES FRANCIS, LB, Baylor; 2. (13,38) HAROLD GREEN, RB, South Carolina; 3. (12,65) BERNARD CLARK, LB, Miami; 4. (11,91) MIKE BRENNAN, OT, Notre Dame; 5. (14,122) LYNN JAMES, WR, Arizona State; 6. (13,150) DON ODFGARD, DB, Nevada-Las Vegas; 7. (12,177) CRAIG OGLETREE, LB, Auburn; 8. (11,204) DOUG WELLSANDT, TE, Washington State; 9. (14,234) MITCHELL PRICE, DB, Tulane; 10. (13,261) ERIC CRIGLER, OT, Murray State; 11. (12,288) TIM O'CONNOR, OT, Virginia; 12. (11,314) ANDRE RILEY, WR, Washington.

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VETERANS ROSTER

NO.	NAME	POS.	HT.	WT.	BIRTH-DATE	COLLEGE	NFL EXP.
42	Ball, E	RB	6-2	211	7/1/66	UCLA	2
35	Barber, C	S	6-0	187	1/15/64	North Carolina A&T	3
86	*Barber, M.	WR	5-11	172	6/19/67	Marshall	2
53	Barker, L.	LB	6-2	227	11/7/59	New Mexico State	7
24	Billups, L	CB	5-11	190	10/10/63	North Alabama	5
74	Blados, B.	G	6-5	295	1/11/62	North Carolina	7
55	Brady, E	LB	6-2	235	6/17/60	Illinois	7
3	Breech, J.	K	5-6	161	4/11/56	California	12
21	Brooks, J.	RB	5-10	182	12/28/58	Auburn	10
81	Brown, E	WR	6-0	185	12/17/62	Miami (Fla.)	6
99	Buck, J.	DE	6-5	264	7/27/63	Brigham Young	4
27	Bussey, B	S	6-0	195	5/20/62	South Carolina	5
34	Carey, R	CB	5-9	185	5/6/68	Idaho	3
56	Chenault, C	LB	6-2	240	11/19/65	Kentucky	1
29	Dixon, R.	CB	5-11	181	12/26/66	Oklahoma	3
7	Esiason, B	QB	6-4	220	4/17/61	Maryland	7
33	Fulcher, D.	S	6-3	228	9/28/64	Arizona State	5
	Garrett, J	WR	5-11	180	3/2/65	Princeton	3
98	Grant, D	NT	6-4	277	9/17/65	West Virginia	3
71	Hammerstein, M.	DE	6-4	270	3/29/63	Michigan	4
40	Holifield, J.	RB	6-0	202	7/14/64	West Virginia	2
82	Holman, R	TE	6-3	238	4/20/60	Tulane	9
36	Jennings, S.	RB	6-1	205	3/12/62	Furman	7
68	Jetton, P.	G	6-4	288	10/6/64	Texas	2
11	Johnson, L.	P	6-2	198	11/27/61	Brigham Young	6
77	Jones, S	T	6-5	278	3/20/66	Washington	3
84	Kattus, E	TE	6-5	235	3/4/63	Michigan	4
58	Kelly, J	LB	6-2	227	12/11/64	Washington	4
64	Kozerski, B.	G	6-4	275	4/2/62	Holy Cross	7
69	Krumrie, T	NT	6-2	262	5/20/60	Wisconsin	8
88	Martin, M.	WR	5-10	186	11/18/60	Illinois	8
72	McClendon, S.	DE	6-6	270	4/9/64	Arizona State	4
85	McGee, T.	WR	5-10	175	8/7/64	Tennessee	5
73	Moyer, K.	T	6-6	292	11/19/66	Toledo	3
78	Munoz, A.	T	6-6	278	8/19/58	Southern Cal	11
26	*Palmer, P.	RB	5-9	181	10/14/64	Temple	4
75	Reimers, B.	T	6-7	280	9/18/60	Iowa State	7
70	Skow, J.	DE	6-3	250	6/29/63	Nebraska	5
83	Smith, K	WR	5-9	189	11/23/65	Utah State	3
20	Taylor, C.	RB	5-11	224	1/3/66	West Virginia	3
22	Thomas, E.	CB	5-11	175	9/11/64	Tulane	4
96	Tuatagaloa, N.	DE	6-4	265	5/25/66	California	2
59	Walker, K.	LB	6-3	238	12/24/65	Maryland	3
63	Walter, J.	T	6-6	290	6/18/63	Texas Tech	6
79	Wells, D.	NT	6-1	265	8/5/66	Arizona	1
51	White, L.	LB	6-2	236	10/4/63	Brigham Young	5
41	Wilcots, S.	CB	5-11	180	10/9/64	Colorado	4
12	Wilhelm, E.	QB	6-3	210	11/19/65	Oregon State	3
30	Woods, I.	RB	6-2	232	2/28/66	UNLV	3
91	Zander, C.	LB	6-2	235	3/23/63	Tennessee	5

*Plan B free agent

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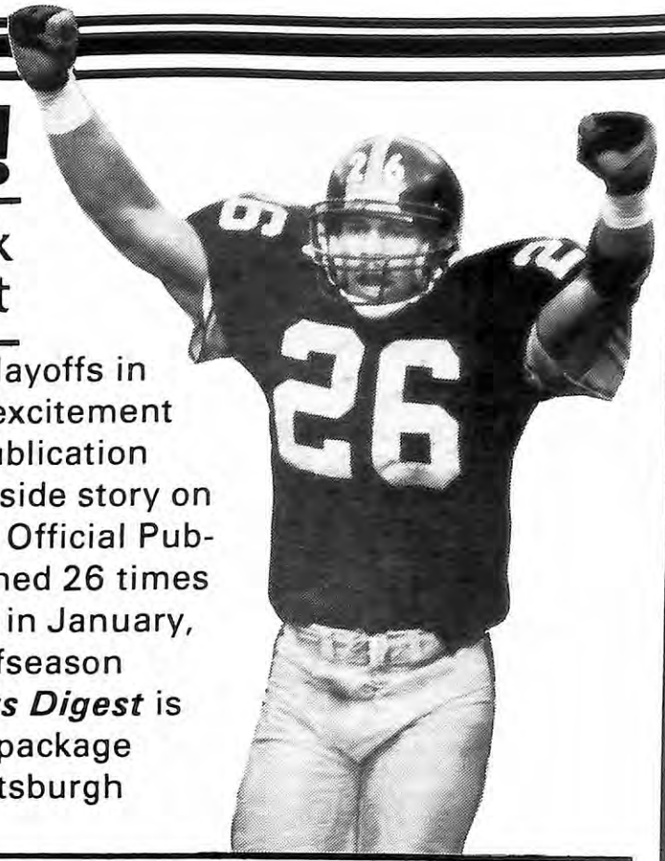

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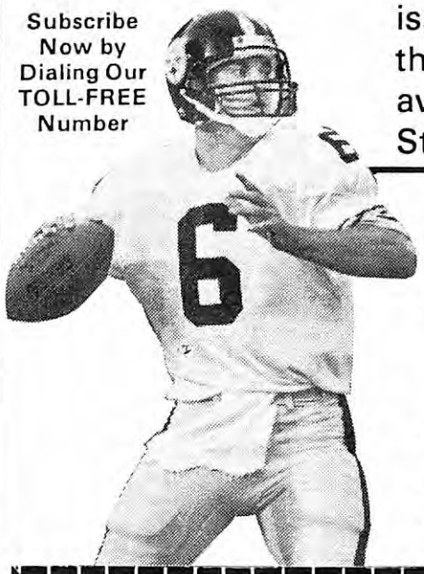

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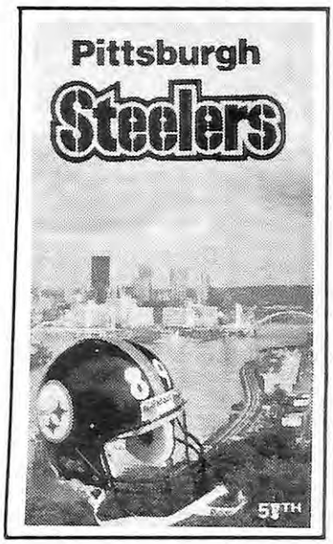

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HOUSTON OILERS

1989 RECORD: 9-7 HEAD COACH: JACK PARDEE STADIUM: ASTRODOME (61,000)

With two games left in the season, the Oilers stood 9-5 and needed only one win to clinch their first AFC Central title. Three weeks later, the Astrodome roof collapsed on coach Jerry Glanville. Rather than bronzing a statue in his honor outside the stadium, Glanville was tarred, feathered and shipped off to Atlanta. It was the end of an error, and the only tears shed in Houston were owner Bud Adams' tears of joy.

Blowing the wild card game at home to the Steelers proved to be the proverbial nail in Count Glanville's coffin. For the first time in his four-year reign, his all-black outfit fit the mood. Adams let Glanville resign, and then united players, fans and media by hiring Jack Pardee away from the University of Houston.

Houston is one of only four teams to make the playoffs the last three seasons. After three consecutive wild card berths, the Oilers are legitimate Super Bowl contenders. Pardee has installed the run-and-shoot and will also switch to a 4-3 defense. And after being pillaged by Plan B in 1989 — losing a league-high 15 players — general manager Mike Holovak added eight free agents.

WIDE RECEIVERS/ TIGHT END

After routinely employing a four-wideout "Red Gun," the run-and-shoot is nothing new to this talented and productive group. Haywood Jeffires and Curtis Duncan, who will flank wide, will now see full-time duty while Drew Hill and Ernest Givins, one of the best pairs in the league, will play the slots. Few wideout duos can rival the averages of Hill (63 catches, 1,045 yards, 16.6) and Givins (57, 941, 16.4) over the past four seasons. But with their precarious combination of small size and fearlessness, they better have good medical plans.

Assuming they do survive another season, defenses are in danger. Hill turns 34 during the season and shows no signs of letting up. Despite missing all of training camp in a contract holdout and two games because of a back injury, he led the team with 66 catches for 938 yards and eight touchdowns. Improved hands accompanied his trademark quickness. He also reads coverages well, finds the open area in zones and adjusts well to the ball.

Givins (55 for 794, 3 TDs) is a veritable lightning bolt. Nagging injuries grounded his acrobatic act last season — his routes have never been the most precise — but he's a bona fide big-play artist who should be outright illegal in the run-and-shoot. He excels in crossing patterns and in displaying his after-the-catch running ability. He gets off the line in a blink, explodes out of cuts and generally leaves defensive backs dizzy. He is so quick and dangerous, the corners practically line up in the end zone. Last year that meant catching a lot of short hitches, which moved the chains but held down his average per catch (from 16.3 to 14.4 last season). Watch for Givins to be used on reverses, quick screens and option passes.

Jeffires (47 for 619), a No. 1 pick three years ago, finally began to live up to expectations. A long strider at 6-2, he can outjump the smaller corners on fade routes. He has excellent speed, soft hands and isn't slowed by jams at the line. With improved concentration reading coverages, he is capable of catching 75 passes in the run-and-shoot.

In his third season, Duncan (43 for 613 yards, 5 TDs) became a force in passing situations. While he's not as flexible nor as quick as Hill and Givins, he is stronger, has better straight-ahead speed and reads well. He blocks, doesn't drop many passes and has a flair for the spectacular.

There is no tight end in the offense. Therefore, the Oilers have stockpiled wideouts. Quickster Leonard Harris might have the best hands on the team. Gerald McNeil, one of three Plan B receivers, played for Pardee in the USFL and knows the system. **GRADE** (max. 10): **8.0**

OFFENSIVE LINE

After reducing their sacks for three consecutive years, the Oilers gave up 13 more (37) than the previous year. They rushed for 20 fewer yards per game. Their average per rush was down as well. While the line was not as consistent as in the past, especially in its run blocking, this is not a trouble area. The run-and-shoot's new schemes involve more pass blocking on running plays, but this group has the talent and experience to adjust.

Pro Bowl starters Mike Munchak and Bruce Matthews continue to rank as the NFL's best pair of guards. Munchak lives in the weight room. Although a troublesome knee has cost him a step or two, he can still physically overpower his man. His forearms pack a big punch and he cuts down a defender's lateral movement by getting into his pads. He's a great finisher and still has the steam to get around the corner.

Matthews is the better athlete. After playing every position in the line except Munchak's left guard, Matthews might be the NFL's most versatile lineman. At 6-5, 286, his size and quickness are rare. His feet are exceptional, and his handwork on pass protection perfect. He can play patty-cake on finesse blocks, or bury his man with strength and technique. When he's required to pull, he's like a rhino on the loose. Sometimes he outguesses himself and can be fooled, but not often.

At right tackle, Dean Steinkuhler had the best season of his six-year career. He has learned to live with a bad knee ravaged by five operations. Despite the loss in quickness, for the first time in two years he was not replaced in passing situations against quicker ends. He gets great positioning on his drops, and improved against outside pressure. Steinkuhler is captain of the offense, the most intense player on the line and still one of the game's best drive blockers.

For the second year in a row, center Jay Pennison started fast and finished slow because of injuries. When his knees act up, he needs help with most nose tackles. A better run blocker with piston-like leg drive and excellent leverage, he puts his hat in the right spot. He's a coach's dream and never quits.

Age, weight and knee problems have caught up with left tackle Bruce Davis. At 34, if he doesn't reduce his weight from the 350 range, no number of arthroscopic surgeries will help. He failed to consistently get good setup position. With his size, it used to take a road map to run around him; last season, ends found plenty of shortcuts. He shortened his stance, to no avail. On run blocking, he gets in the way and falls on his man. Although he still studies opponents and knows their strengths and weaknesses, he's clearly a descending player. Veteran Don Maggs or 1989 No. 1 David Williams will challenge Davis. Maggs seldom gets beat on pass protection. Both have exceptional feet and need to play stronger and tougher.

GRADE (max. 10): **7.5**

QUARTERBACK

Changing offenses is nothing new to Warren Moon, who's working with his third head coach and fifth offensive coordinator since arriving in Houston in 1984. In 1989, Moon, a young 33, enjoyed his best season, earning his second consecutive trip to the Pro Bowl. Last season linebackers took deeper drops, forcing him to throw underneath the coverage more than any time in his career. As a result, he established personal bests in completion percentage (60.3), completions (280), yards (3,631), touchdowns (23) and QB rating (88.9).

Mobile and intelligent, Moon audibilizes perhaps more than any quarterback in the league. He's learned when to throw the ball away, keeps the ball low in a crowd and can still make big plays running with the football. With a laser-like release, he can zip it or lay it between defenders; few throw it any better on the run. He's a strong leader and could post some big numbers in the Oilers' run-and-shoot.

Cody Carlson demanded to be traded in the offseason. With his strong arm, poise and leadership ability, the Oilers would rather pay him than trade him.

GRADE (max. 10): **8.0**

RUNNING BACKS

So many backs, so few footballs. As a result, none got enough playing time. Alonzo Highsmith (531 yards) was followed by Allen Pinkett (449), Lorenzo White (349) and Mike Rozier (301). Since only one back plays in the run-and-shoot, White was traded and Rozier was being shopped. Pinkett and Highsmith will do the heavy work.

Pound for pound, Pinkett (5-9, 192) is the strongest player on the team. While he lacks blazing speed, he has the cutback ability to break open draws and traps fundamental to the run-and-shoot. An intelligent player who seldom makes the wrong read or hits the wrong hole, he'll see some time in the slot where his elusiveness can be utilized on shuffle passes and inside reverses. He had 31 receptions last season.

Just when the defense sets itself for Pinkett's finesse moves, the Oilers have 234-pound Highsmith to knock them on their cans. Highsmith has the size, power and determination to stone blitzing linebackers and the strength to stalemate larger ends. While Highsmith is more of a straight-ahead runner, he has enough wrinkles to keep defenders honest. For their own protection, arm tacklers need not apply. Occasional concentration lapses will result in dropped passes, but he apparently has overcome the fumbling problems that plagued him earlier in his three-year career. Since the one-back look means he will no longer be bound to a blocking role, he should get more chances to show off his running ability.

Rozier, who was being offered around the league for a draft choice, had the worst season of his career. After back-to-back Pro Bowl appearances, he wanted a new contract, missed training camp and preseason and then suffered a knee injury. When he returned from arthroscopic surgery, he was out of shape and out of favor. At 29, he still has some good years left but needs to get the ball 20 times a game. He has good instincts, decent quickness and can break tackles. He has average hands, and as a blocker hits anything that moves. **GRADE** (max. 10): **7.0**

DEFENSIVE LINE

Add Houston to the growing list of poor pass-rushing teams trying to find new life in a 4-3. Last season, the line played the run well but gave opposing QBs far too much peace of mind. Ray Childress, who will start out at left tackle in the new alignment, led the team with 8½ sacks while fellow ends William Fuller (6½) and Sean Jones (6) provided a modicum of pressure. With the linebackers slated for more coverage duties, the pressure — and the key to the entire team — is on this group to produce. There's certainly enough talent.

Childress, who missed the last three games because of a broken leg, is the club's best defensive player. He chases down everything and for the fifth straight season led Houston linemen in tackles. By moving him inside, the Oilers hope he'll see fewer double-teams and more bull-rushing sacks. At 6-6, Childress can block out the sun. He is, however, vulnerable to cut blocks and often loses leverage to shorter linemen. He compensates with great strength, not great quickness, and an outstanding ability to free himself of blockers. He's at the top of his game.

Moving to a 4-3, where the ends no longer have to play directly over offensive tackles, should help Fuller and Jones. Fuller is quick off the mark and never lets up on the pass rush. At just 6-3, great timing makes him the club's best at batting down passes. Fuller has a good spin and rip move, but won't overpower the bigger tackles. His run defense has improved over the past three years, and play-

ing on the left side next to Childress should help.

Full-time duty should benefit Fuller and Jones. Jones racked up 15½ sacks in his last season as an end in the Raiders' 4-3. At 6-7, 273, the lanky Jones fires off the line with the quickness and speed to beat tackles to the backfield. He works hard to develop his moves, but unlike Fuller or Childress, takes too many on-field timeouts. He lacks the strength to bull rush, and needs help stacking up blockers and making plays at the point.

The right tackle spot is up for grabs, with Doug Smith, Richard Byrd and Glenn Montgomery in the hunt. Smith, a veteran starter at the nose, will get the first shot, so to speak. In the 1989 offseason, he was shot in the knee in an incident in his North Carolina hometown and, though his rehabilitation appeared to be successful, he lost some quickness and confidence. A one-down player who has never been in tip-top physical condition, he hangs in there against the run but has yet to make good use of his formidable straight-ahead pass-rushing ability. Byrd, a six-year veteran, can't escape physical blockers but won't yield ground, either. Don't be surprised if Montgomery, a second-year player (fifth round) who played for Jack Pardee at the University of Houston, winds up getting most of the playing time. At 6-0 he looks more like a nose tackle, but has exceptional quickness and came on late.

Plan B veteran end Ezra Johnson has stayed in excellent condition at age 35. A finesse player with all the moves, he played in passing situations for the Colts last season and notched 8½ sacks. **GRADE** (max. 10): **6.5**

LINEBACKERS Johnny Meads, this team's most talented and productive linebacker, still falls short of being an "impact player." He recorded only four sacks last season, three coming in one game. Meads is quick and strong, makes plays all over the field and paralyzes blockers with an irresistible head fake. With more coverage assignments in the new defensive look, he'll have to put some of that aggressiveness in reverse. He's an outstanding athlete and should be a quality performer for years.

With the switch to the 4-3, John Grimsley and Al Smith will battle for the middle job. Grimsley is the favorite. A seven-year veteran, Grimsley is a full-tilt hitter who relishes taking on centers and guards. Despite average strength and subpar speed (4.9-5.0), he sheds well and led Houston tacklers with 102 stops (72 unassisted). He's a liability in pass coverage. Smith has more tools than Grimsley but lacks the same toughness. He has good strength and the speed/range to get to the sidelines, but is prone to injury. He may get a look on the outside.

Captain Robert Lyles, a seven-year veteran on the strong side, is an undersized, intelligent player and veritable bookworm studying opponents. A martial arts expert, he's flexible and has exceptional hands for shedding and tackling. Due more to anticipation and preparation than speed, he's the only linebacker who remains in nickel situations. The knock on Lyles last season was a tendency to let up when there was no big-play opportunity. He needs to play with more consistency.

Eric Fairs played some at end and came through with 2½ sacks. Eugene Seale, the 5-10, 250-pound "One Man Gang," is a special teams force who's yet to settle down in a linebacker role. **GRADE** (max. 10): **5.0**

DEFENSIVE BACKS Since 1987, the defensive backfield has regressed from a team strength to its weakest link. Last season, opposing offenses blistered the Oilers with an astounding nine scoring passes of 63 yards or more. The players blamed Glanville's system; Glanville blamed the players. With the exception of cornerback Steve Brown and rookie strong safety Bubba McDowell, none of the defensive backs played well and only five were protected in Plan B. Expect the Oilers to play less bump-and-run and get more help underneath from the linebackers.

Brown, an eight-year veteran, feuded publicly with Glanville's strategies, then responded by having his best season. No cornerback plays the run tougher than Brown. He no longer gets in a receiver's face, nor jams like he used to. Instead, he went to more of a cushion, relying on good recovery speed and breaking on the ball. He's especially adept at stripping receivers.

McDowell, a third-round pick last year, had a superlative first year at strong safety. A college cornerback, he can run, hit and react. When the tight end blocks, he comes up like a freight train and can crash the backfield. He also has good hand techniques in fighting off blockers, and his massive thighs launch him like a rocket. The pleasant surprise was his pass defense. He's quick and over the second

Bubba McDowell

half of the season made few mistakes.

Patrick Allen was lit up like a Christmas tree. Starting with the opener, every time he was beaten, he was pulled. His head was on a swivel, always looking toward the bench. A pure cover corner who doesn't play the run well, Allen has fluid hips and the makeup speed to be a solid pass defender. However, if he loses concentration, as he did last season, he can look very bad. If Allen falters at the right corner, Cris Dishman and 1985 No. 1 pick Richard Johnson will get their chance. Dishman had a controversial second season, mouthing off, committing stupid penalties and getting into fights — just what Glanville ordered. When Dishman concentrates on playing rather than talking, he has good cover instincts and is a tough run supporter. He'll have to learn to play in a more varied scheme.

Since the Oilers didn't protect a free safety in Plan B, Johnson has a shot at corner or the middle. As the nickel back who played both spots, Johnson is smart, fast, loves to play zone and has better hands than most receivers. He also spent five years in Glanville's doghouse. Glanville didn't think Johnson was tough enough; the front office thought he was the most talented. This year we'll find out who was right.

Veteran Terry Kinard (Giants) and David Arnold (Steelers) are safety candidates courtesy of Plan B. Kinard started every game, and is one year removed from the Pro Bowl. His big plays disappeared over the last two seasons; consequently, so did he. He's a centerfielder who lost his thump following a shoulder injury. Rookie Arnold was a special teams player. **GRADE** (max. 10): **5.0**

SPECIAL TEAMS Gerald McNeil, a Plan B return specialist from Cleveland, should provide the missing ingredient to Houston's solid special teams. Greg Montgomery led the AFC in gross punting while field goal kicker Tony Zendejas, who has averaged more than 100 points in his five years with the Oilers, set a club record with 115. With their hit-the-beach mentality, the coverage teams have been remarkable the last two years.

GRADE (max. 10): **7.5**

COACHING/ ORGANIZATION Jack Pardee has been coach of the year with five teams — Chicago and Washington (NFL), Orlando (WFL), Houston (USFL) and the University of Houston (NCAA). This is the first time he has taken over a team with so much talent. Glanville's quarterback coach, Kevin Gilbride, was elevated to offensive coordinator to administer the run-and-shoot. Pardee brought along his longtime defensive coordinator, Jim Eddy. Pardee is a quiet football man who delegates authority and credits his players.

Mike Holovak is in his second year as general manager. He's a strong personality who controls drafts and trades, and was more aggressive in Plan B.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.0**

DRAFT After finishing 26th in points allowed and surrendering a dozen touchdown plays of 58 yards or more, the Oilers desperately needed some stoppers and spent four of their first five choices on defense. No. 1 Lathon, who played for Pardee across town, put concerns over his surgical knee to rest with some outstanding offseason workouts. He has size, speed (4.5) and tackles hard, but tends to skirt blockers rather than shed them. He may be better suited for the outside. Alm can handle the run but lacks pass-rush skills. Peguese, another defensive lineman, can move but needs more muscle to handle the run. Linebacker Newbill, a teammate of Peguese at Miami (Fla.), will hit and has some range. Later rounds netted run-and-shoot midget receivers Jones and Coleman, who both run in the 4.3s. **GRADE** (max. 10): **5.0**

1990 DRAFT round number (pick in round; overall sequence): 1. (17,15) LAMAR LATHON, LB, Houston; 2. (16,41) JEFF ALM, DT, Notre Dame; 3. (19,72) WILLIS PEGUESE, DE, Miami; 4. (18,99) ERIC STILL, OG, Tennessee; 5. (17,126) RICHARD NEWBILL, LB, Miami; 6. (16,153) TONY JONES, WR, Texas; 7. (19,184) ANDY MURRAY, RB, Kentucky; 8. (18,211) BRETT TUCKER, DB, Northern Illinois; 9. (17,237) PAT COLEMAN, WR, Mississippi; 10. (16,264) DEE THOMAS, DB, Nicholls State; 11. (19,295) JOEY BANES, OT, Houston; 12. (18,321) REGGIE SLACK, QB, Auburn.

T.Q.©65.5

VETERANS ROSTER

NO.	NAME	POS.	HT.	WT.	BIRTH-DATE	COLLEGE	NFL EXP.
29	Allen, P.	CB	5-10	182	8/26/61	Utah State	7
31	*Arnold, D.	S	6-3	210	11/21/66	Michigan	2
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67	Camp, R.	DE	6-4	270	2/28/61	California	6
14	Carlson, C.	QB	6-3	194	11/5/63	Baylor	4
79	Childress, R.	DT-DE	6-6	276	10/20/62	Texas A&M	6
77	Davis, B.	T	6-6	315	6/21/56	UCLA	12
28	Dishman, C.	CB	6-0	178	8/13/65	Purdue	3
80	Duncan, C.	WR	5-11	184	1/26/65	Northwestern	4
51	Fairs, E.	LB	6-3	238	2/17/64	Memphis State	5
88	*Ford, B.	WR	5-10	171	5/13/66	Central Florida	2
95	Fuller, W.	DE	6-3	269	3/8/62	North Carolina	5
97	Garalczyk, M.	DT	6-5	272	8/12/64	Western Michigan	3
81	Givins, E.	WR	5-9	172	9/3/64	Louisville	5
59	Grimsley, J.	LB	6-2	238	2/25/62	Kentucky	7
83	Harris, L.	WR	5-8	162	11/27/60	Texas Tech	5
87	*Harry, C.	WR	5-9	168	10/26/67	Utah	1
32	Highsmith, A.	RB	6-11	234	2/26/65	Miami (Fla.)	4
85	Hill, D.	WR	5-9	174	10/5/56	Georgia Tech	11
86	Jackson, K.	WR	6-0	183	2/15/62	Penn State	7
84	Jeffires, H.	WR	6-2	201	12/12/64	N.C. State	3
90	*Johnson, E.	DE	6-4	255	10/2/55	Morris Brown	14
23	Johnson, R.	CB	6-1	195	9/16/63	Wisconsin	6
22	Jones, Q.	S	5-11	194	7/28/66	Pittsburgh	2
96	Jones, S.	DE	6-7	273	12/19/62	Northeastern	7
27	*Kinard, T.	S	6-1	198	11/24/59	Clemson	8
56	Kozak, S.	LB	6-3	226	11/28/65	Oregon	2
93	Lyles, R.	LB	6-1	230	3/21/61	TCU	7
78	Maggs, D.	T-G	6-5	285	11/1/61	Tulane	4
74	Matthews, B.	G	6-5	286	8/8/61	Southern Cal	8
25	McDowell, B.	S	6-1	195	11/4/66	Miami (Fla.)	2
89	*McNeil, G.	WR	5-8	144	3/27/62	Baylor	5
91	Meads, J.	LB	6-2	232	6/25/61	Nicholls State	7
94	Montgomery, Gl.	DT	6-0	274	3/31/67	Houston	2
9	Montgomery, Gr.	P	6-4	217	10/29/64	Michigan State	3
1	Moon, W.	QB	6-3	210	11/18/56	Washington	7
63	Munchak, M.	G	6-3	284	3/5/60	Penn State	9
52	Pennison, J.	C	6-1	282	9/9/61	Nicholls State	5
20	Pinkett, A.	RB	5-9	192	1/25/64	Notre Dame	5
66	*Robison, T.	G-T	6-4	295	11/17/61	Texas A&M	3
30	Rozier, M.	RB	5-10	213	3/1/61	Nebraska	6
53	Seale, E.	LB	5-10	250	6/3/64	Lamar	4
54	Smith, A.	LB	6-1	240	11/26/64	Utah State	4
99	Smith, D.	DT	6-6	286	6/13/59	Auburn	6
70	Steinkuhler, D.	T	6-3	287	1/27/61	Nebraska	7
73	Williams, Da.	T	6-5	292	6/21/66	Florida	2
69	Williams, Do.	G-T	6-6	295	10/1/62	Texas A&M	3
7	Zendejas, T.	K	5-8	165	5/15/60	Nevada-Reno	6

*Plan B free agent

PITTSBURGH STEELERS

1989 RECORD: 9-7 HEAD COACH: CHUCK NOLL STADIUM: THREE RIVERS (59,000)

Forget all those Super Bowl championships, Chuck Noll's finest coaching job came last year. Despite last-place rankings in total offense, passing, first downs, third-down conversions and yards per pass, Pittsburgh came within one point (24-23) and one late Denver rally from making the AFC Championship Game.

Pittsburgh's turnaround was even more startling considering its second successive 1-5 mark against AFC Central opponents. Noll's young team, which nearly flamed out after the season's first two games (they were buried 92-10), rebounded to finish 9-5 (5-2 on the road) before eliminating Houston in playoff overtime.

All this after Noll had revamped his staff in the 1989 offseason. Now, once again, he must overcome major staff changes. Gone are eight-year offensive coordinator Tom Moore (Minnesota) and defensive coordinator Rod Rust (New England head coach). Linebackers coach Dave Brazil, the club's third defensive coordinator in three years, will retain his former boss' complicated but successful system. Joe Walton should refresh the Steelers passing game, and has a history of developing quarterbacks.

Bolstered by steady rebuilding via the last four drafts, this team featured an NFL-high 12 rookies a year ago and 29 players with a maximum of three years of experience. Fourteen of the 22 starters were in their first or second seasons.

WIDE RECEIVERS/ TIGHT END

The Steelers like a vertical passing game and Louis Lipps (50 for 944, 5 TDs) is still the main man, although he consistently draws double coverage and has lost a step after six seasons. Lipps' best deep route is the out-and-up. He gets off the line with strong hand moves, makes sharp cuts and runs precise patterns. He catches in traffic and has remarkable leaping ability. Lipps looks like a running back (5-10, 190) and does that, too, finishing third on the team in rushing last year with an explosive 180 yards (13.8 average, 1 TD) on reverses.

Derek Hill, a third-round pick last year, not only has good size (6-1, 193) but has the speed to free up Lipps underneath. Hill started the last eight games after a knee injury hampered him early, and finished with 28 catches for 455 yards (16.3 average, 1 TD). He's strong enough to go inside, accelerates like an Indy car, explodes out of his cuts and is dangerous in the open. A long strider, he must work getting off the line against a strong jam.

There is little depth. Dwight Stone, a running back who can fly, was moved outside, started the first eight games, caught only seven passes and returned to the backfield. Veteran Weegie Thompson and rookie Mark Stock, who dropped a crucial playoff pass at Denver, are not the answers, though Stock is a nimble athlete.

For the first time since Bennie Cunningham was rumbling around, the Steelers enjoyed a receiving dimension from the tight end. Plan B journeyman Mike Mularkey had a career-high 22 catches (14.8) and could flourish under Walton's system. Mularkey, a solid blocker who lacks speed, is especially tough evading linebackers over the middle and never drops a pass. Billy Griggs, a six-year veteran, was added from the Jets via Plan B.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.0**

OFFENSIVE LINE

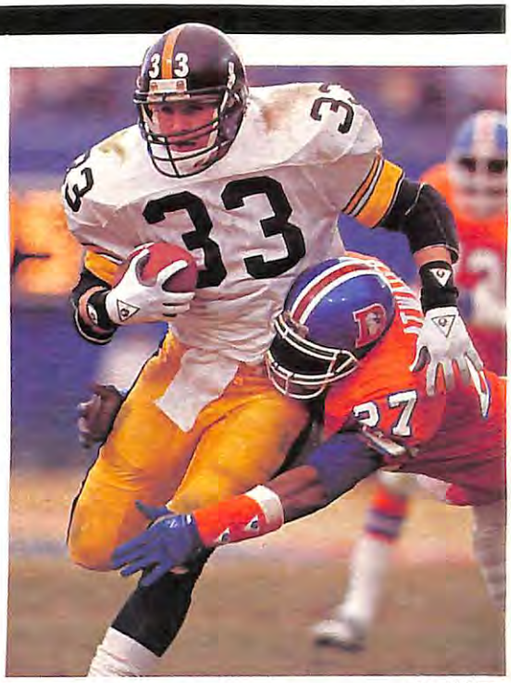
In the first seven games, the Steelers used six different starting combinations before locking in a lineup, featuring the league's best trap blockers, that took them to the playoffs. Pass protection is another matter; only the New York Jets gave up more sacks (62) than the Steelers (51).

The best news was a healthy John Rienstra at left guard. The top pick in 1986 had cracked ribs early, but started burying opponents after he became a regular. The best athlete in this group at 6-5 and 264, he is super-strong, knows how to keep defenders in front of him and can turn the corner pulling on sweeps. He's on a Pro Bowl course.

Getting around guard Terry Long, a 5-11, 275-pound battering ram, is like circling the globe. Long, who missed all or parts of seven games with knee and ankle injuries, has immense strength and good quickness. He gets excellent leverage, seldom is knocked off balance and maintains a steady, low base in pass protection. Despite short arms, he has excellent punch technique.

In his first season as the starting center, Dermontti Dawson didn't make anyone forget Mike Webster. But that was the plan. Dawson needed the playing time, and Webster went to Kansas City. Dawson can be awesome with his fancy footwork, finesse blocks and ability to fire out on a linebacker, yet was often overpowered by more physical nose tackles. He'll need better upper-body strength to last as long as Webster.

Carnell Lake



Merril Hoge

Bad shoulders forced right tackle Tunch Ilkin to undergo arthroscopic surgery after going to his second straight Pro Bowl, the first Steelers tackle to repeat since Charley Bradshaw (1964-65). Ilkin is a tenacious run blocker and adept pass protector. A good hand-fighter, he stays after his man and finishes his run blocks. Pass rushers occasionally undermine his strong base by forcing him to shuffle his feet and slide laterally in the pocket.

Opposite Ilkin is John Jackson, a 10th-round pick two years ago who was force-fed into the lineup. As a rookie reserve, he was terrible, but from midseason on last year improved dramatically. Jackson (6-6, 288) is an imposing specimen and uses his massive hands well both on run and pass protection, though average feet make him susceptible to the quicker ends. When he compensates by overplaying the outside rush, he gets hurt by the inside move. Still, few figured he would progress so rapidly.

Tom Ricketts, a No. 1 pick last season, has been slowed by nagging injuries but has the strength to lift a battleship and the feet to dance on deck. He's a fundamentally sound pass protector who'll back up both tackle spots until he masters the Steelers' traps and cutoff techniques. Brian Blankenship, with 22 starts over three seasons, hasn't progressed.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.5**

QUARTERBACK

Despite the Steelers' last-place finish in total offense and passing yards, Bubby Brister showcased what many insiders already knew: He is a talent. Coaches like to call him a gamer, a leader. Certainly, few athletes are as intense or competitive. Those same fiery traits that cause him to get down on himself or lose his cool also inspire teammates. A knee injury in the fifth game last season limited his ability to plant and throw deep, resulting in just four completions longer than 50 yards, after tossing five touchdown passes of 65 yards or more the previous year. But he improved in completion percentage (47.3 to 54.7), TD/interception ratio (11/14 to 9/10) and in overall rating (65.3 to 73.1) from 1988. He is big, strong, can run and take a hit — which too often he was forced to prove. He has a quick release,

strong arm, excels at play-action and is developing a better touch. Improving his reads and overall accuracy are his biggest needs. New mentor Joe Walton should help.

Randy Wright, who sat out last season after being released by Green Bay, a team for which he started 32 games, is Brister's opposite — a calm, deep thinker who lacks a strong arm and is best at short/intermediate passes. He also threw 37 interceptions from 1986-88.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.5**

RUNNING BACKS For the first time since 1969, Noll's first season, the Steelers were outrushed (125.5 to 113.6 yards per game). It wasn't for a lack of weapons in the backfield.

Merril Hoge could be the league's most underrated fullback, though statistics won't make his case — 621 yards and a 3.3 average. An overachiever with a solid work ethic, he makes few mistakes and is sound fundamentally. He scored a team-leading eight touchdowns, gets the call when the Steelers are close to the end zone and has impeccable running form: good body lean, low glide and a shoulder waiting for would-be tacklers. He plays his blockers beautifully and proved he's no plodder with playoff runs of 49 and 45 yards. A reliable receiver (84 catches in two seasons), he can block, too.

Tim Worley is at the superlative end of the talent spectrum from Hoge, and makes an ideal backfield partner. The No. 1 pick in '89, he has outstanding size (6-2, 228) and was a former sprint champion. The first rookie to lead the team in rushing since Franco Harris in 1972, Worley gained 417 of his 770 yards in the last five games. He would have packed it even more if he hadn't fumbled so often earlier in the season. Worley (9 fumbles) has small hands and must work more on securing the football. He possesses the strength and in-line quickness you want in a big running back and does a good job blocking for the fullback, which is critical in the Steelers' weakside "under" series. He had only 15 receptions, but when he catches the swing pass, squares his shoulders and turns upfield, he's a nightmare in cleats.

Rodney Carter is a better receiver than running back and has almost become a third-down specialist. He'll line up wide, in the slot or at wingback, has good hands and finished second in receptions (38). Warren Williams is a slasher who can bounce outside.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.5**

DEFENSIVE LINE After Keith Gary (1981), Gabe Rivera (1983), Darryl Sims (1985) and Aaron Jones (1988), the Steelers are still looking for a quarterback chaser. Almost apologetically, this group still plays the run better.

Squatty end Keith Willis (6-1, 263), who made a successful comeback from a neck injury that sidelined him in 1988, is the closest thing Pittsburgh has to a down pass rusher. His 6½ sacks in '89 moved him to third on the club's all-time list, with 47. Another overachiever who depends on quickness, he stays low and is most effective with a rip move. He uses his hands well to disengage from blockers, but is nothing special meeting action head-on. Tim Johnson, the other end, plays the run better but has been slowed by nagging injuries. He can ward off the tackle, rather than being driven, has deceptive quickness and a good spin move. But he is a little undersized (6-3, 269), particularly when he moves to tackle in four-man fronts.

Nose tackle Gerald Williams is the most improved player. He attacks the run and is strong enough to tie up blockers. While he doesn't steamroll many centers, he has surprising speed and the lateral mobility to make plays outside.

Jones is the best reserve, despite an unproductive two seasons (41 tackles, 3½ sacks). As a rookie, he was moved from end to linebacker, but stayed at end last year and showed flashes. He has the tools to be a pass rusher — size (6-5, 257), acceleration, long arms and speed, but has been too easy to overpower and knock off his feet. A.J. Jenkins needs more size (6-2, 237) but has pass-rush quickness.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.0**

LINEBACKERS David Little, a 10-year inside veteran, had a Pro Bowl-caliber year. He led the team in tackles (104) for the third straight season, and had two sacks. From his left side, he excels against the run, pounds guards with his huge hands and packs a wallop that rattles both helmet and rib cage. Little uses good leverage techniques and positioning to keep from being sized and squared up by bigger guards. He doesn't have coverage speed, yet survives (3 interceptions) by knowing every trick in the book.

Right outside linebacker Greg Lloyd, a 1987 sixth-round pick out of Fort Valley State, has become the big-play maker on defense. He was second in tackles (92), led the team with seven sacks, had three interceptions and as many forced fumbles. Nasty and tougher than sandpaper, he uses speed and aggressiveness to stuff tight ends, or whip the back when he zeroes in on the quarterback. Vulnerable defensing the pass, he'd rather knock out a mouthpiece than knock down a throw.

The other outside linebacker, nine-year vet Bryan Hinkle, could be dethroned by Jerrol Williams. Hinkle has shown some erosion the last couple of years, accelerated in '89 by a hasty return following a broken leg. He was not effective against the run, and has a lost a step in coverage. The club hopes Williams (6-5, 242), a fourth-round pick a year ago, is ready for full-time duty. He had three sacks in his first two games, and should at least provide spot duty on passing downs. He has fine blitzing and coverage speed, long arms to neutralize blockers and Lloyd's athleticism, but so far has been more sizzle than substance.

The Steelers must get more production opposite Little. Starter Hardy Nickerson, who missed six games after breaking a leg, is a physical player with decent quickness but doesn't have the pass-coverage abilities to complement Little. Jerry Olsavsky, a 10th-round pick, is a typical overachiever with more heart than ability.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.0**

DEFENSIVE BACKS Like the linebackers, these guys hit first and ask questions later. Rod Woodson went to the Pro Bowl as a return specialist but could have gone as a starting cornerback. Thanks to his recovery jets, Woodson gets away with lazily letting receivers run by him. In pressing defenses, his hand strength helps him get a good jam at the line; in zones, he has fine anticipation, breaks on the ball and closes in a hurry. Some have compared his physical prowess to Louis Wright, but he's a more explosive athlete than the former Denver All-Pro. Woodson is one of the most well-rounded corners in the game.

His counterpart is Dwayne Woodruff, an 11-year veteran who, though left unprotected, has not yet let younger, faster corners force him to the sidelines. His four interceptions led the team and gave him a career total of 34, fifth on the Steelers' all-time list. He studies receivers and reacts to quarterbacks' eyes. Although he allows a big cushion, he closes quickly and likes to deny the outside route, forcing the receiver inside. He supports well on sweeps.

Free safety Thomas Everett has a bigger heart than body (5-9, 184). Consequently, this hard hitter tends to wear down later in the season. He has good range, instincts, decent speed and is all too willing to support the run; he can be suckered on play-action passes and is only average playing the ball.

The Steelers uncovered an excellent strong safety in Carnell Lake, a UCLA outside linebacker who made the transition to the secondary as a rookie. Outstanding speed and size (6-1, 205) allow him to muscle up or run with tight ends. He forces and tackles (like a linebacker) and just needs more time to learn the position, especially man-coverage skills.

The best reserve, Delton Hall, can play corner or safety and will hit. A headhunter type, Hall broke his wrist in '88 and has since had trouble jamming receivers. Like many aggressive players, he gets caught peeking into the backfield and can be had on play-pass. Versatile Larry Griffin has fine quickness and burst, while cornerback David Johnson has the speed and coverage skills to challenge Woodruff.

GRADE (max. 10): **7.5**

SPECIAL TEAMS Kicker Gary Anderson became the club's all-time leading scorer last season, finishing the campaign 28 of 37 in field goals. He is third in accuracy (76.6 percent) among active NFL kickers and can still get distance in clutch situations. Just ask the Oilers — Anderson's 50-yarder was the difference in the wild card game.

The Steelers lost Harry Newsome in Plan B, and signed Dan Stryzinski, who failed at Indianapolis and Cleveland and has yet to punt in the regular season. The job is his to lose. Rod Woodson is an excellent return man, especially on kickoffs (27.3 average). Punt and kickoff coverage is above-average, with Dwight Stone leading special units with 11 tackles.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.5**

COACHING/ ORGANIZATION The Steelers simply have one of the best organizations in the NFL, starting with Dan Rooney, the president and owner, down to Chuck Noll, one of the best coaches in NFL history (193-140-1). Noll plots the course, and assistants realize that it's his way or the highway. With four Super Bowl rings and just seven wins away from becoming only the fifth NFL coach to hit 200 victories, Noll has little left to prove.

Dick Haley, director of player personnel, and college scout Tom Modrak deserve credit for their roles in recent Steelers drafts, especially for work done in the late rounds. In '87 and '88, the Steelers gleaned starters from No. 6 picks (DE Johnson, LB Lloyd) and No. 10 picks (RB Hoge, OT Jackson). In the '89 draft, 10 roster spots were filled, including four (WR Stock, CB Johnson, DE Jenkins, LB Olsavsky) chosen in the sixth, seventh, ninth and 10th rounds, respectively.

GRADE (max. 10): **8.5**

DRAFT At 270 pounds, Green wages his own battle of the bulge. If he wins, he could be the Steelers' best tight end since the days of 260-pound Bennie Cunningham. He's a sledgehammer blocker who should beef up the power sweep and needs only the polish — to go with good hands and long reach — to become a solid receiver.

Davidson, a postseason workout wunderkind, was primarily a backup in college and a bit of a gamble. If he comes through, he'll really make this draft. O'Donnell has raw talent with little feel for the passing game while another third-rounder, Veasey, has a quick charge and could add some pass rush.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.0**

1990 DRAFT round number (pick in round; overall sequence): 1 (23,21) ERIC GREEN, TE, Liberty; 2 (18,43) KENNY DAVIDSON, DF, Louisiana State; 3 (17,70) NEIL O'DONNELL, QB, Maryland; 3 (28,81) CRAIG VEASEY, DT, Houston; 4 (16,97) CHRIS CALLOWAY, WR, Michigan; 5 (19,128) BARRY FOSTER, RB, Arkansas; 6 (18,155) RONALD HEARD, WR, Bowling Green; 7 (17,182) DAN GRAYSON, LB, Washington State; 8 (16,209) KARL DUNBAR, DT, Louisiana State; 9 (19,239) GARY JONES, DB, Texas A&M; 10 (18,266) EDDIE MILES, LB, Minnesota; 11 (17,293) JUSTIN STRZELCZYK, OT, Maine; 12 (16,319) RICHARD BELL, RB, Nebraska.

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VETERANS ROSTER

NO.	NAME	POS.	HT.	WT.	BIRTH-DATE	COLLEGE	NFL EXP.
1	Anderson, G.	K	5-11	180	7/16/59	Syracuse	9
60	Blankenship, B.	G-C	6-1	275	4/7/63	Nebraska	4
6	Brister, B.	QB	6-3	210	8/15/62	NE Louisiana	5
24	Carter, R.	RB	6-0	210	10/30/64	Purdue	4
63	Dawson, D.	G-C	6-2	275	6/17/65	Kentucky	3
27	Everett, T.	FS	5-9	184	11/21/64	Baylor	4
68	Freeman, L.	NT	6-5	298	5/23/64	Pittsburgh	4
76	Gouldsby, M.	DT	6-2	290	8/24/65	San Jose State	1
22	Griffin, L.	S	6-0	200	1/11/63	North Carolina	5
	*Griggs, B.	TE	6-3	245	8/4/62	Virginia	6
35	Hall, D.	CB	6-1	207	1/16/65	Clemson	4
77	Haselrig, C.	NT	6-1	273	1/22/66	Pitt-Johnstown	1
82	Hill, D.	WR	6-1	193	11/4/67	Arizona	2
53	Hinkle, B.	LB	6-2	225	6/4/59	Oregon	9
33	Hoge, M.	RB	6-2	230	1/26/65	Idaho State	4
	*Holmes, D.	DB	6-2	190	9/6/64	Fort Valley State	3
62	Ilkin, T.	OT	6-3	266	9/23/57	Indiana State	11
65	Jackson, J.	OT	6-6	288	1/4/65	Eastern Kentucky	3
99	Jenkins, A.	LB-DE	6-2	237	4/12/66	Cal St Fullerton	2
44	Johnson, D.	CB	6-0	185	4/14/66	Kentucky	2
78	Johnson, T.	DE-DT	6-3	269	1/29/65	Penn State	4
97	Jones, A.	DE	6-5	257	12/18/66	Eastern Kentucky	3
37	Lake, C.	SS	6-1	205	7/15/67	UCLA	2
51	Lanza, C.	C	6-2	260	9/20/64	Notre Dame	3
83	Lipps, L.	WR	5-10	190	8/9/62	Southern Miss	7
50	Little, D.	LB	6-1	233	1/3/59	Florida	10
95	Lloyd, G.	LB	6-2	222	5/26/65	Fort Valley State	3
74	Long, T.	G	5-11	275	7/21/59	East Carolina	7
84	Mularkey, M.	TE	6-4	237	11/19/61	Florida	8
54	Nickerson, H.	LB	6-2	231	9/1/65	California	4
92	Olsavsky, J.	LB	6-1	222	3/29/67	Pittsburgh	2
85	O'Shea, T.	TE	6-4	236	12/3/66	California (Pa.)	2
71	Ricketts, T.	OT	6-5	298	11/21/65	Pittsburgh	2
79	Rienstra, J.	G	6-5	264	3/22/63	Temple	5
55	Simien, T.	LB	6-1	245	5/21/67	Texas Christian	1
80	Stock, M.	WR	5-11	177	4/27/66	VMI	2
20	Stone, D.	WR-RB	6-0	190	1/28/64	Middle Tenn. State	4
11	Strom, R.	QB	6-2	210	3/11/65	Georgia Tech	2
	Stryzinski, D.	P	6-1	195	5/15/65	Indiana	1
87	Thompson, W.	WR	6-6	215	3/21/61	Florida State	7
23	Tyrrell, T.	RB	6-2	215	2/19/61	Northern Illinois	7
43	Wallace, R.	RB	6-0	233	12/3/63	Purdue	4
98	Williams, G.	NT	6-3	279	9/8/63	Auburn	5
57	Williams, J.	LB	6-5	242	7/5/67	Purdue	2
42	Williams, W.	RB	6-0	204	7/29/65	Miami (Fla.)	3
93	Wills, K.	DE	6-1	263	7/29/59	Northeastern	8
49	Woodruff, D.	CB	6-0	195	2/18/57	Louisville	11
26	Woodson, R.	CB	6-0	196	3/10/65	Purdue	4
38	Worley, T.	RB	6-2	228	9/24/66	Georgia	2
9	Wright, R.	QB	6-2	200	1/21/61	Wisconsin	6

*Plan B free agent

CLEVELAND BROWNS

1989 RECORD: 9-6-1 HEAD COACH: BUD CARSON STADIUM: CLEVELAND (80,088)

Bud Carson, 59, didn't waste his long-awaited head coaching debut. He became the first rookie coach since Denver's Red Miller in 1977 to lead his team to the AFC Championship Game. The Broncos, though, didn't cooperate, slamming the door on Carson and the Browns for the third time in four years.

After coming close, Carson can taste the title. He brought in four new assistants, including offensive coordinator Jim Shofner, to help spark a rapidly aging team (14 players will be 30 or older this year). Injuries, retirement and ineffective play have unsettled the offensive and defensive lines.

The Browns overcame their slow starts — they failed to score in the first quarter 11 times last season — by protecting the ball (only 30 turnovers, second in the AFC) and fielding a seventh-ranked defense that finished fourth in points allowed (15.9). That defense, which also scored six touchdowns, kept them in games but didn't always get the win. Cleveland lost four games by a touchdown or less, dropped all four in which they trailed after the third quarter and won just one of four overtime contests.

The Browns have been to the playoffs for five consecutive years and have the AFC's best record over the past four seasons (41-21-1). Although they captured five AFC Central crowns in the '80s, they know in their division it's a short drop from top to bottom.

WIDE RECEIVERS/ TIGHT END

In the offense's strongest and deepest position, Webster Slaughter just might be the best wideout this side of Jerry Rice. For the first time in club history, two receivers (Slaughter and Reggie Langhorne) caught at least 60 passes.

Slaughter, a Pro Bowl starter for the first time, averaged 19 yards per catch and scored touchdowns on receptions of 97, 80 and 77 yards en route to a club-record 1,236 yards (65 catches, 6 TDs). He has more moves getting off the line than most receivers have in their whole bag. He'll use the slap and arm-over, or even a dropstep to keep corners from jamming him. While he is not a straight-ahead burner, he has a great burst and can separate from defenders. He has great concentration, doesn't drop many, makes the acrobatic catch in traffic and has outstanding open-field moves.

Slaughter gets most of the ink, while Langhorne remains one of the league's more underrated receivers. The six-year veteran has 117 catches over the last two seasons, including 60 for 749 and two TDs last year. Langhorne doesn't have the speed or talent of Slaughter, but is a dependable intermediate pass catcher who prefers working the sidelines. Opposing corners try to force him inside. Langhorne has good hands and can shake free after the catch, but won't stretch many secondaries.

Brian Brennan caught the fewest passes (28) in his career, but is still one of Bernie Kosar's favorite clutch targets; he caught two touchdowns in the AFC Championship Game. Brennan is an overachieving possession receiver with deceptive speed and good quickness in and out of his cuts. He relies on good hands and finding the soft spots underneath coverage. Most defenders position themselves between him and the passer, forcing Brennan into deeper waters, where he's clearly in over his head.

The Browns traded a pair of 1989 picks, running back Herman Fontenot and a 1990 No. 1 for the right to choose Lawyer Tillman. With a full training camp (Tillman held out as a rookie), perhaps the Browns will realize more than six catches for 70 yards. He certainly possesses the talent and potential. At 6-5, 230, he's a graceful, physical athlete who eventually could project at tight end.

To the relief of coaches, 34-year-old Ozzie Newsome decided against retirement. The greatest tight end in NFL history caught only 29 passes last season, and is no longer as effective blocking, but he's by far the best on this team. He gets open over the middle with an artful array of pushes and shoves. Free agent John Talley was the early bet to stick as a blocking backup.

GRADE (max. 10): **7.0**

OFFENSIVE LINE

If it's truly what's up front that counts, the Browns are in trouble. Thanks to Kosar's quick reads and even quicker unloading of the football, the line allowed a respectable 34 sacks. But there's clearly far more tenacity than talent or health in this unit. Guards Dan Fike and Ted Banker were injured last season and underwent knee surgery. Fike won't be ready until at least October, while Banker was released. Left tackle Rickey Bolden missed 10 games with a shoulder injury, then went under the knife (knee) in the offseason. Right tackle Cody Risien retired. Center Gregg Rakoczy struggled and may move to guard. Stay tuned, you'll be quizzed later.

Things would be easier if Risien, a la Newsome, would reconsider. There are about 625,000 reasons (dollars) Risien would change his mind after undergoing 10 operations in 11 years (7 elbow, 3 knee). Throughout his career, he's been a fine pass protector and position run blocker. If he stays retired, Kevin Robbins, Kevin Simons or the gargantuan Ben Jefferson (6-8, 345) — big, tough boys with lots to learn — are waiting in the wings.

Left tackle Rickey Bolden is an injury-prone veteran, a college tight end who has played both guard and tackle for the Browns. When healthy, he sets up in a hurry and has good footwork. Although a bit stiff, he has long arms to push his man wide, gives good second effort and doesn't quit after a mistake. He's an average run blocker who lacks explosion and sustain.

Paul Farren plays where he's needed the most. Ideally, if Risien unretires and Bolden is healthy, he can stay inside. Last season, he filled in for Bolden at left tackle and wound up starting the final 13 games. Farren has neither nifty feet nor impressive strength. He stays low, positions himself well and doesn't make mental mistakes. He retreats quickly into his set off the snap and does a good job copying the rusher. He's probably best working in space, and passes off well in zone blocks. He's only a fair drive blocker, and power rushers give him problems.

With Fike rehabilitating his knee, Rakoczy could project at guard. The former second-round pick started 32 consecutive games at center, just long enough to convince Cleveland to rehire Mike Baab via Plan B (New England). Baab, who had started 62 games in a row for Cleveland before being dumped to make room for Rakoczy, is a much better pass protector. He's a good team leader and an intense, powerful drive blocker. Though he lacks great lateral quickness and the speed to cut off secondary pursuit, he's extremely tough in space.

Rakoczy is plenty strong at the point, but is stiff and unathletic in space. He overextends, loses his base and has trouble staying on his feet. Coaches hope the move to guard will help. Tony Jones stepped in at right guard for Fike and played well the last three regular season games and in the playoffs. He has fine athletic ability, sets a bit high in pass protection, but slides well. A capable run blocker, he can play outside, too. Fike (6-7, 280) can clear a path for running backs and provide enough of an obstacle to detour pass rushers.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.0**

QUARTERBACK

All Bernie Kosar has done in his five seasons is guide the Browns to five playoff appearances, including four division crowns. He is 39-21-1 as a starter. Kosar played with elbow and shoulder injuries last season and took a lot of heat, especially in a late, three-game losing streak. Considering the ravaged, average line he was throwing behind, his struggles reflected more toughness and resourcefulness than talent problems.

One could tell Kosar was hurting from the way he moved. His stance was cocked, and late in the season he was almost shot-putting the ball. Offensive coordinator Jim Shofner needs to find ways of taking pressure off his quarterback, before Kosar's body grows old before its time. Kosar might be the smartest quarterback in the league. He reads defenses exceptionally well, routinely dumps to second and third receivers and feasts on blitzing packages. Although hounded most of the season, he still found time to go deep to Slaughter. Kosar's lack of arm strength is well established, but he gets as much out of his field vision, accuracy, oft-sidearm release and feel for the pocket as any flame-throwing peer.

Mike Pagel, a nine-year veteran who threw only 14 passes last season, has a strong arm and good mobility. He's too inconsistent to be a regular, but is a quality reserve.

GRADE (max. 10): **7.5**

RUNNING BACKS

First, Earnest Byner was traded to the Redskins for seldom-used Mike Oliphant, then Kevin Mack was arrested and sent to a drug rehab clinic. If Eric Metcalf, the No. 1 draft choice, hadn't came to the rescue, the Browns would have been at home for the playoffs.

The Browns packaged three picks to move up in the first round to get Metcalf (1,748 all-purpose yards), who responded with team highs in rushing (633 yards) and touchdowns (10). He also caught 54 passes, a Cleveland rookie record. Metcalf bounces around like a laser light show. He has wide receiver size, and will split out, but the backfield needs his speed, acceleration and riveting change of direction. He has excellent hands, and unrivaled game-breaking ability after the catch. He sees the field well but is better on sweeps and quick screens, tending to get bogged down behind the line. He lacks the strength for 20 carries a game, but has excellent fourth-quarter legs.

After missing the first 12 games, Mack's return was a real boost to the running game. Although he carried only 37 times, one was a touchdown that beat Houston and clinched the division title. Mack is a tough inside runner with pretty good straight-line speed, tackle-breaking power and excellent body lean. An average blocker and receiver, he worked hard in the offseason to make a successful comeback.

Cleveland needs a big running back to spell Metcalf and Mack. Tim Manoa (87 for 289, 3 TDs) started 15 games at fullback, but is a limited, north-south ballcarrier. A solid blocker who also caught 27 passes, he's a top reserve forced into a starting role.

Oliphant (15 for 97) didn't make anybody forget Byner. He's small, fast, elusive and should get more opportunities this season. Veteran Barry Redden, a career backup, is a straight-line runner with marginal receiving skills.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.5**

DEFENSIVE LINE

After a switch to the 4-3 defense, the line registered 31 of a team-record 45 sacks and limited opponents to 3.7 yards per carry. Not bad for a front that, aside from AFC Defensive Player of the Year Michael Dean Perry, features a 38-year-old and two 1989 Plan B ends.

Perry is everything his older and fatter brother, William, never turned out to be. Perry erupts off the ball, stays low and maintains excellent leverage. Sixteen times, his blocker was called for holding. He's a strong bull rusher (7 sacks, 49 QB pressures) with enough wrinkles (including a superb spin move) to keep blockers off-balance. He shoots the gaps, plays the run well and takes a lot of chances Rarely knocked off his feet, he has excellent balance and *is*

Reggie Langhorne

very good on stunts.

"Big Daddy" Carl Hairston, the 15-year veteran who turns 38 this season, battled nagging injuries to record 6½ sacks from his left tackle spot. He no longer has the quickness to excel in stunts, and tends to get winded, but is still strong at the point. He comes hard on the inside and uses effective rip and spin moves to get to the passer.

End Robert Banks is better squelching the run than chasing quarterbacks, and may wind up on the left side. Playing next to Perry, Banks failed to take full advantage of the double-teams thrown at Perry, registering just 4½ traps. Without many moves, he's a rigid upfield charger who has trouble disengaging from blocks. He is fairly quick, pursues and makes plays behind the line.

Al Baker, 33, is a 13-year veteran who led the team with 7½ sacks. Tall and slippery, his long arms ward off blockers and bat down passes (16). He still has good quickness and is a competent upfield rusher with nice moves. Earlier in his career, he had good strength at the point; now he relies on cute sidesteps to avoid blockers.

Rookie end Andrew Stewart flashed the upfield quickness (3 sacks) to challenge for a starting job. Chris Pike is basically a short-yardage tackle, but fills the gaps and has the height (6-8) and reach to make a passer think twice. Tom Gibson can't play the run as well, but is more effective (16 QB hurries) crashing the pocket.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.0**

LINEBACKERS Two Pro Bowl players out of three starters isn't bad. It also reflects a defense adjusting well to a new alignment (4-3). With All-Pros Clay Matthews (outside) and Mike Johnson (inside), and athletic David Grayson (outside), this was undoubtedly the club's strength.

Strongside linebacker Matthews, 34, blitzed less (4 sacks) and covered more in 1989. A five-time Pro Bowl selection, Matthews doesn't run as fast, but still closes on quarterbacks and ballcarriers. He knows how to use his hands, gets rid of blockers and looks to strip the ball. He's strong against the run yet has the fluid lateral quickness to cover the backs, staying in during passing situations. He recovered two fumbles and forced three.

Johnson went to the Pro Bowl, and is still underrated. He packs a punch on running plays, sheds blocks well and keeps the guards away from his knees. He's got that good shoulder dip and has a nose for the ball. Although he could step up and fill quicker, he's a fluid player who isn't often fooled. He takes a nice drop in zone coverage, but with Matthews in the lineup comes out on passing downs.

Forget the Pro Bowl, David Grayson got off to a Hall of Fame start, scoring two touchdowns in the 51-0 opening victory over Pittsburgh. A neck injury knocked him out in Week 11. One of the fastest outside players in the league, he uses makeup speed to overcome subpar instincts. He can be overpowered on the run, if blockers can catch him. Van Waiters, who filled in for Grayson, will compete for the starting assignment. Like Grayson, he's hard-nosed and moves well. Waiters improved each week and might see action at end in passing situations. He has some good moves and is difficult to knock off his feet.

Clifford Charlton, the No. 1 pick in 1988, has been unable to rise above special teams duty. Playing behind Matthews last year, he made one tackle. Charlton is strong and fast, but has been slow to catch on. Lawrence McGrew, a Plan B free agent who started every game for the Patriots last season, has limited range and is better on the inside.

GRADE (max. 10): **7.5**

DEFENSIVE BACKS Frank Minnifield and Hanford Dixon used to rank among the best pair of cornerbacks in the league. Then Dixon ran out of gas and wound up in San Francisco courtesy of Plan B. Cleveland signed Raymond Clayborn (Patriots), hoping he'll blend in nicely with a defense that was an NFL-second in both interceptions (27) and completion percentage (49.8).

The original Dawg, Dixon's bark became much more ominous than his bite. By breaking up their act, coaches are hoping Minnifield will regain his old form. Despite being named to his third straight Pro Bowl, he lost ground when turning on a receiver and was beaten too many times. He still gets in a receiver's face, and is a master of disguise when it comes to holding. He is physical both in run support and pressing receivers. Wideouts who escape his jams and make him run have the most success. Minnifield is smart, instinctive and has the quickness and ball reactions to back up his fierce competitiveness. He led the club with 17 passes defensed.

Clayborn is a 14-year veteran whom the Browns hope has borrowed another year from the fountain of youth. After starting 14 games for the Patriots last season, he's been handed Dixon's job. Clayborn, 35, stays in great shape and seems to be playing better as he gets older. He spends hours in the film room studying receivers' moves. He's aware, plays the quarterback's eyes and shoulders, and diagnoses routes in a blink. He has enough quickness to play in today's pressing defenses, but prefers to plant-and-break from a healthy cushion.

For the first time in years, Cleveland's safeties were actually the strength of the secondary. Both were run-bashers. Thane Gash topped the team in tackles while Felix Wright, who moved from free to strong safety, led the NFL in interceptions with nine. Gash is a hitter who wraps up well, but struggles in one-on-one coverage. In nickel and dime situations, he often lines up as a linebacker and will blitz. At free safety, he has good range and loves to hang and wait for the crossing routes over the middle. He returned two of his three interceptions for touchdowns last season. Wright moves back to free safety in nickel situations. He can support the run or become a centerfielder. He's aggressive, but not a great cover guy. Preferring zones, he's another veteran who's quick to diagnose.

If Clayborn falters, Mark Harper could step up. He doesn't have great speed and compensates by trying to disrupt receivers on the line of scrimmage. He's better in zones. Tony Blaylock came off the bench and blitzed for four sacks. He's tough against the run but average on coverage. Rookie safety Kyle Kramer may have been the hardest hitter on the team.

GRADE (max. 10): **7.0**

SPECIAL TEAMS Despite a late-season slump, Matt Bahr was once again Mr. Consistent (11 of 13 inside the 40), kicking on the league's worst stadium surface. He should get a medal. Punter Bryan Wagner gets more hang time than distance or accuracy. He also does most of the kicking off, but his percentage of touchbacks (13 percent) was not as good as Bahr's (23.5). He could be replaced.

Eric Metcalf is an outstanding kickoff returner and may share punt return duties with Mike Oliphant. Punt coverage was better than average (8.5 compared to league average of 9.1), but kickoff coverage was mediocre (20.3).

GRADE (max. 10): **5.5**

COACHING/ ORGANIZATION A good organization usually starts at the top, and the Browns have one of the best head men in owner Art Modell. He desperately wants to win a Super Bowl, spends big bucks on the best assistant coaches, and generally keeps his players financially happy. Ernie Accorsi, the executive vice president of football operations, is a shrewd personnel man.

Head coach Bud Carson has one of the league's best staffs. For years one of the NFL's top defensive coordinators, he speaks softer now that he's a head coach. Despite this team's injuries and problems, the Browns finished just one game shy of the Super Bowl.

GRADE (max. 10): **7.5**

DRAFT Without a top pick, the Browns looked to the second round for the big back they covet to spell Mack and Metcalf. And they may have found a good one. At 220 pounds, Hoard has outstanding body lean, gets off the mark quickly, breaks tackles and can take it outside, even though he isn't that elusive. The next four picks targeted Cleveland's coverage and pass-rush needs. Pleasant has narrow hips and lacks bulk, but has the quickness and long arms to apply for pass-rush specialist. Ditto Burnett, who arrives on the strength of his junior season. Barnett and Hilliard have talent and could provide secondary depth.

GRADE (max. 10): **4.0**

1990 DRAFT round number (pick in round; overall sequence): 2. (20,45) LEROY HOARD, RB, Michigan; 3. (20,73) ANTHONY PLEASANT, DE, Tennessee State; 4. (20,101) HARLON BARNETT, DB, Michigan State; 5. (20,129) ROB BURNETT, DE, Syracuse; 6. (20,157) RANDY HILLIARD, DB, Northwestern State (La.); 7. (13,178) SCOTT GALBRAITH, TE, Southern California; 8. (20,212) JOCK JONES, LB, Virginia Tech; 9. (20,240) EUGENE ROWELL, WR, Southern Miss; 10. (20,268) MICHAEL WALLACE, DB, Jackson State; 11. (20,296) CLEMENTE GORDON, QB, Grambling State; 12. (20,323) KERRY SIMIEN, WR, Texas A&I.

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VETERANS ROSTER

NO.	NAME	POS.	HT.	WT.	BIRTH-DATE	COLLEGE	NFL EXP.
61	*Baab, M.	C	6-4	270	12/6/59	Texas	9
9	Bahr, M.	K	5-10	175	7/6/56	Penn State	12
60	Baker, A.	DE	6-6	280	12/9/56	Colorado State	13
97	Banks, R.	DE	6-5	255	12/10/63	Notre Dame	4
64	Baugh, T.	C	6-4	290	12/1/63	Southern Illinois	5
24	Blaylock, T.	CB	5-10	190	2/21/65	Winston-Salem St.	3
77	Bolden, R.	OT	6-4	280	9/8/61	SMU	7
36	Braggs, S.	CB	5-9	180	8/29/65	Texas	4
86	Brennan, B.	WR	5-10	185	2/15/62	Boston College	7
58	Charlton, C.	LB	6-3	245	2/16/65	Florida	3
43	Clack, D.	RB	5-10	220	10/29/63	Arizona State	5
26	*Clayborn, R.	CB	6-1	186	1/2/55	Texas	14
74	Farren, P.	T-G	6-6	270	12/24/60	Boston University	8
69	Fike, D.	OG	6-7	285	6/16/61	Florida	6
30	Gash, T.	S	5-11	200	9/1/65	East Tennessee St.	3
71	Gibson, T.	DE	6-7	250	12/20/63	Northern Arizona	2
79	Graybill, M.	OT	6-7	275	10/14/66	Boston University	1
56	Grayson, D.	LB	6-2	235	2/27/64	Fresno State	4
78	Hairston, C.	DE	6-2	275	12/15/52	Maryland-E. Shore	15
23	Harper, M.	CB	5-9	185	11/5/61	Alcorn State	5
62	Jefferson, B.	OT	6-8	345	1/15/66	Maryland	1
59	Johnson, M.	LB	6-1	225	11/26/62	Virginia Tech	5
66	Jones, T.	OT	6-5	285	5/24/66	Western Carolina	3
19	Kosar, B.	QB	6-5	210	11/25/63	Miami (Fla.)	6
40	Kramer, K.	S	6-3	190	1/12/67	Bowling Green	2
88	Langhorne, R.	WR	6-2	200	4/7/63	Elizabeth City St.	6
34	Mack, K.	FB	6-0	230	8/9/62	Clemson	6
42	Manoa, T.	FB	6-1	240	9/9/64	Penn State	4
57	Matthews, C.	LB	6-2	245	3/15/56	Southern Cal	13
53	*McGrew, L.	LB	6-5	233	7/23/57	Southern Cal	10
21	Metcalf, E.	RB	5-10	185	1/23/68	Texas	2
31	Minnifield, F.	CB	5-9	180	1/1/60	Louisville	7
82	Newsome, O.	TE	6-2	225	3/16/56	Alabama	13
33	Oliphant, M.	RB	5-9	170	5/19/63	Puget Sound	3
10	Pagel, M.	QB	6-2	211	9/13/60	Arizona State	9
92	Perry, M.	DE	6-0	280	8/27/65	Clemson	3
75	Pike, C.	DT	6-8	290	1/13/64	Tulsa	2
73	Rakoczy, G.	C	6-6	290	5/18/65	Miami (Fla.)	4
35	Redden, B.	FB	5-10	219	7/21/60	Richmond	9
72	Robbins, K.	OL	6-4	286	12/12/67	Michigan State	1
52	*Rose, K.	LB	6-1	216	6/9/62	Nevada-Las Vegas	4
70	Simons, K.	OT	6-3	315	4/25/67	Tennessee	1
84	Slaughter, W.	WR	6-0	170	10/19/64	San Diego State	5
96	Stewart, A.	DE	6-5	265	11/20/65	Cincinnati	2
90	Talley, J.	TE	6-6	250	12/19/64	West Virginia	1
65	*Tamm, R.	G-C	6-3	280	3/11/66	West Chester	1
85	Tillman, L.	WR	6-5	230	5/20/66	Auburn	2
15	Wagner, B.	P	6-2	200	3/28/62	Cal St. Northridge	4
50	Waiters, V.	LB	6-4	245	2/27/65	Indiana	3
22	Wright, F.	S	6-2	195	6/22/59	Drake	6

*Plan B free agent

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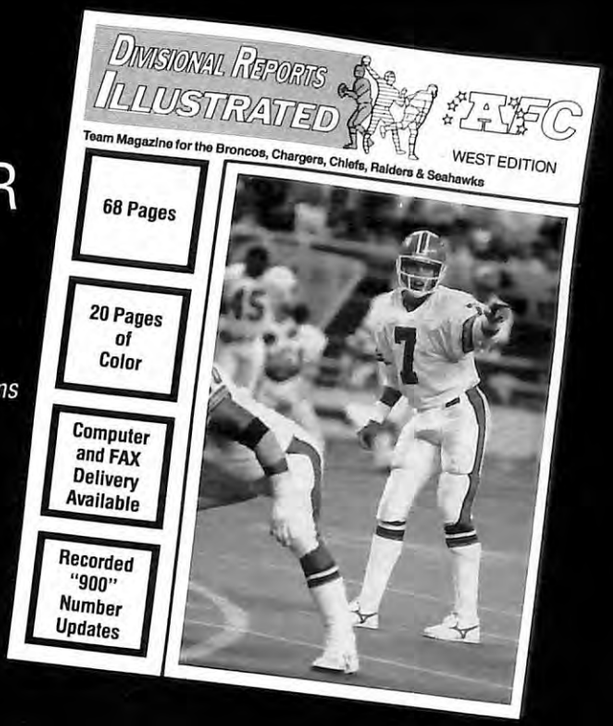
offensive coordinator, Detroit Lions



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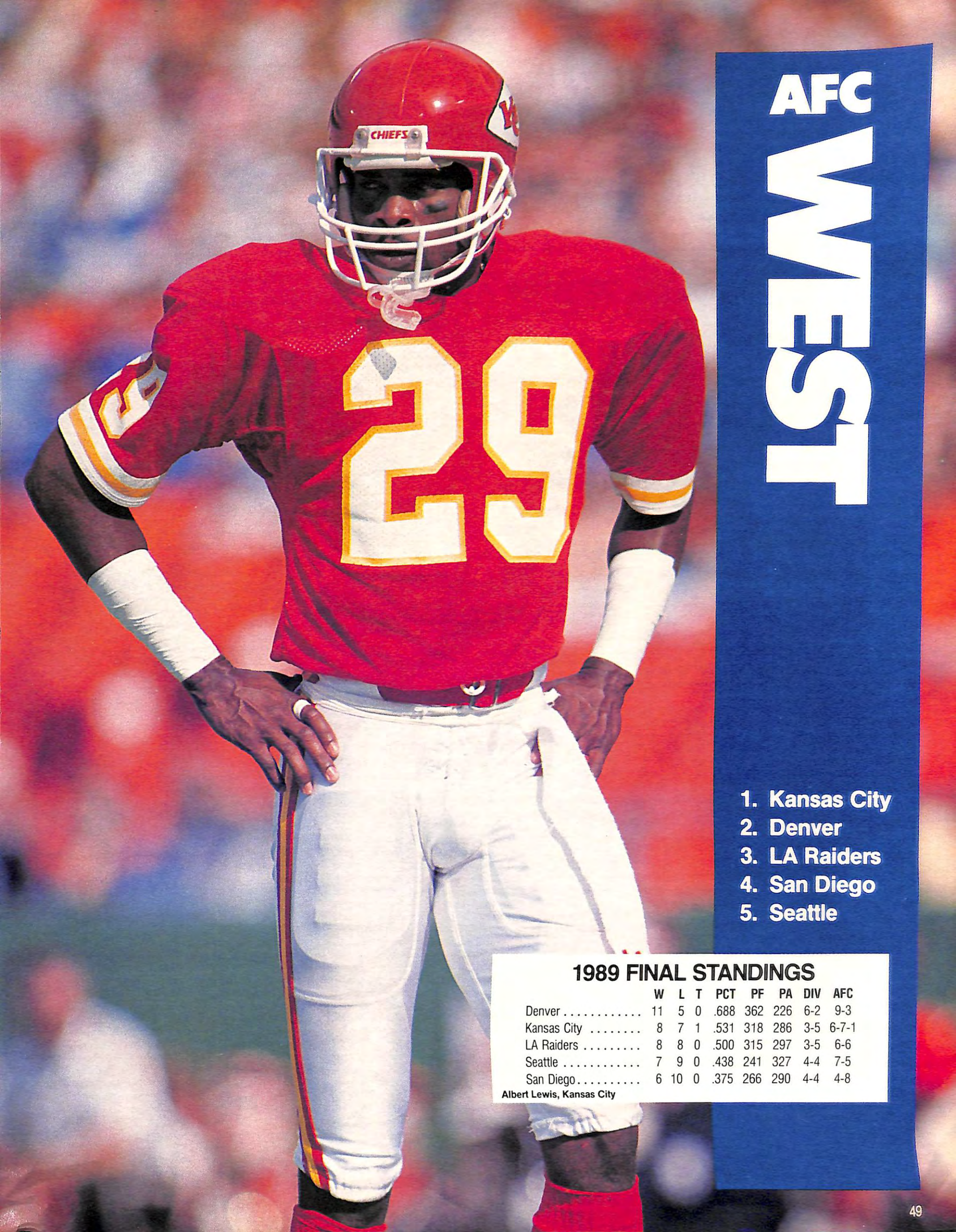


AFC WEST

1. Kansas City
2. Denver
3. LA Raiders
4. San Diego
5. Seattle

1989 FINAL STANDINGS

	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA	DIV	AFC
Denver	11	5	0	.688	362	226	6-2	9-3
Kansas City	8	7	1	.531	318	286	3-5	6-7-1
LA Raiders	8	8	0	.500	315	297	3-5	6-6
Seattle	7	9	0	.438	241	327	4-4	7-5
San Diego	6	10	0	.375	266	290	4-4	4-8

Albert Lewis, Kansas City

KANSAS CITY CHIEFS

1989 RECORD: 8-7-1 HEAD COACH: MARTY SCHOTTENHEIMER STADIUM: ARROWHEAD (78,067)

The Chiefs bring into the 1990 season the NFL's top rusher, the AFC's top defense, the game's all-time kicker for accuracy, 10 past Pro Bowl performers, a coach who has never had a losing record in his five full NFL seasons and — for the first time in almost two decades — a legitimate chance of competing for the AFC Championship.

The Chiefs haven't been champions of anything really meaningful since their 1969 season when they won the American Football League title and Super Bowl IV. In the 20 years since the merger of the two leagues, the Chiefs have won only one division championship, appeared in just two playoff games and posted only seven winning seasons. But one of those winners came last year after Marty Schottenheimer signed on as coach. The Chiefs finished second in the AFC West with an 8-7-1 record.

Schottenheimer returned the Chiefs to basic football with a dominating running game and defense. Christian Okoye, coming off a club-record and NFL-leading 1,480-yard rushing season, powers the ground game, and seven past Pro Bowl picks — nose tackle Bill Maas, linebackers Dino Hackett and Derrick Thomas and defensive backs Lloyd Burruss, Deron Cherry, Albert Lewis and Kevin Ross — bolster the defense.

WIDE RECEIVERS/ TIGHT END

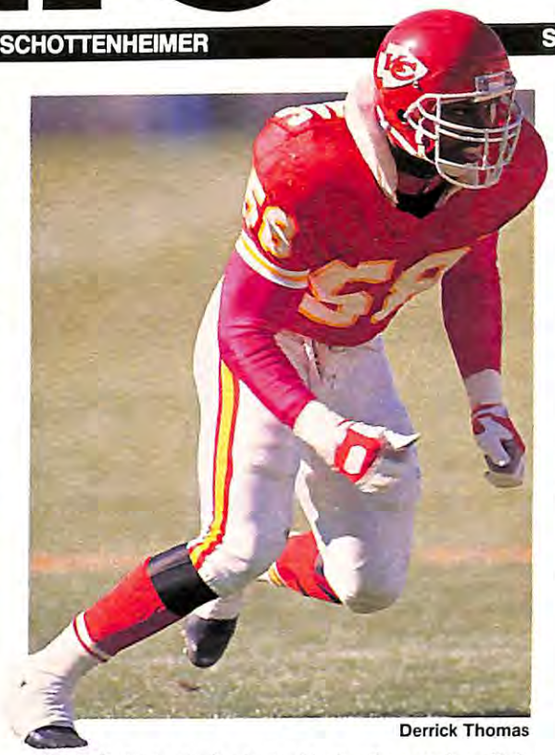
A glaring lack of speed on the flank translates into a glaring lack of big plays by the Kansas City offense. Willie "Flipper" Anderson of the Los Angeles Rams had four catches of 50 or more yards last season. The Chiefs, collectively, had one. Anderson had 16 catches of 30 or more yards. The Chiefs, collectively, had 10. Little wonder Kansas City finished 21st in the NFL in passing last season, averaging only 12.4 yards a reception and scoring only 14 touchdowns.

The club's two starting wideouts, Stephone Paige and Pete Mandley, both run in the 4.6s, and the top reserve, Emile Harry, runs in the 4.7s. Paige is the club's money receiver. He had seven of those 30-yard catches last year and all three of the club's 100-yard receiving games. A fluid athlete who runs smooth patterns, Paige is a tough competitor willing to lay out for the ball or go up in a crowd. He has the best hands and best separation on the team. He can get open underneath, has a burst for the ball and can turn a short pass into a long gainer. On the down side, he struggles against a corner with good press technique.

Mandley is at his best catching the ball in stride. When he makes the catch facing the quarterback, he tends to cradle the ball and go down on his own. Like Paige, he's a tough receiver who can take a lick and hold on. That's why the Chiefs like him on slants. Harry is a smallish control receiver who makes the catch and little else. He has difficulty shaking man coverage and can't get open downfield. He knows how to run routes and set up defensive backs, but he doesn't make big plays. The Chiefs like him on inside routes out of the slot.

The future belongs to Robb Thomas and Naz Worthen, a couple of promising 1989 draft picks who spent most of their rookie seasons on injured reserve. Thomas has good but inconsistent hands. He'll make the acrobatic catch, then drop an easy one because he tries to run before securing the ball. He has the best speed of all the wideouts at 4.55, but he operates better in a possession mode. Worthen, another 4.6 guy, has the quickness to beat the bump but lacks intensity.

Tight end Jonathan Hayes is a first-rate blocker but a marginal receiver. He lacks confidence in his hands and will body-catch. He gets off the line quickly but doesn't drop his weight on his cuts. When the ball is in his hands, he runs stiff and goes down without much resistance. As a blocker, Hayes has initial quickness at the snap, locks on and relies on his upper-body strength to muscle defenders.



Derrick Thomas

Alfredo Roberts also is a better blocker than receiver. He's faster and has softer hands than Hayes, but is slow off the line and doesn't make cuts with quickness or explosion. He blocks best when he's on the move.

GRADE (max. 10): **4.0**

OFFENSIVE LINE

Kansas City did not have a single offensive lineman selected for the Pro Bowl in the 1980s. The Chiefs thought that was an oversight in 1989. Their line fashioned the holes for Okoye to win the NFL rushing title and also allowed the third-fewest sacks in the league (23).

Victimized by the oversight was John Alt. Even though he plays left tackle and lines up against the NFL's premier pass rushers on the open side each week, Alt has allowed only 3½ sacks in the past three seasons. He is 6-7 and 300 pounds with good feet, long arms and excellent technique. He's quick enough to slide out and steer speed rushers upfield, and his weight allows him to stand in against bull rushers. Double moves by pass rushers give Alt his only problems. Last season, the Chiefs began teaching their linemen a drop step, and that turned Alt from an average run blocker into a good one. The extra step gives him more thrust and brings his upper-body strength more into play. Nonetheless, he remains more of a position blocker with good knee bend and body control.

Right tackle Irv Eatman is as big and more physically gifted than Alt. He has excellent upper-body strength, is quick off the ball and strikes with leverage. He is a masher on drive blocks and can also make the wheel block. But he is inconsistent and his concentration wanders in pass protection. He gets lazy with his footwork and allows the big play. If he can keep is mind on his job for 16 weeks, he also is a Pro Bowl candidate.

In David Lutz and Rich Baldinger, the Chiefs have a pair of converted tackles at guard. Lutz (6-6, 303) is a powerful drive blocker with some pop off the snap and good balance. His arm extension makes him effective in pass protection, but he has trouble with a quick pass rusher and doesn't adjust to secondary moves. Baldinger (6-4, 292) is a mauler. He's slow-footed and relies too much on upper-body strength. His lack of body control and balance give him problems in space. He's strictly an in-tight run blocker who survives on effort, determination and know-how.

The Chiefs hope they can squeeze one more year out of center Mike Webster, who signed on as a coach in 1989 but decided he could contribute more on the field than off. Even though he is 38, he signed another one-year contract for this season. He lacks size, but knows all the tricks. Webster has good feet, takes the proper angles and gets himself into winning position on blocks. But he has lost most of his quickness and holds much more than he used to. He also labors against taller power players.

Michael Harris and Gene Chilton are interior backups. Harris is mammoth (6-4, 306) but green. Chilton lacks strength and explosion, struggles in a confined area yet can pull and make the block in the open field.

GRADE (max. 10): **8.0**

QUARTERBACK

Steve DeBerg completed 60 percent of his passes last season and only five NFL quarterbacks had a better average per attempt than his 7.81 yards. But DeBerg was yanked as the club's starter twice, and this season will be hard-pressed to hold off Dallas cast-off Steve Pelluer.

Pelluer became expendable when the Cowboys drafted both Troy Aikman and Steve Walsh last year, and the Chiefs acquired him in a fire sale last October. He replaced DeBerg in his third week but suffered a knee injury in his third start and turned the job back to DeBerg. Pelluer has good mobility and will run rather than take a sack or throw an interception. That gives him a big edge over DeBerg. Pelluer can throw on the run, but he doesn't always make good decisions and will force the ball. In the pocket, he is erratic. His passes tend to drift and he'll miss open targets. However, Pelluer is tough, intelligent, takes shots and has the composure to make the big plays late in a game.

DeBerg understands the offense and can read defenses. He has a good arm, release and zip on the ball. He's accurate and will make the big throw if it's there. But he's not very mobile and pressure bothers him. He's not willing to hang in the pocket and take shots, and he doesn't create plays when he's flushed. What's worse, he doesn't protect the ball and sometimes turns it over in dramatic fashion. He had two interceptions returned for touchdowns in the season opener against Denver last year. When the offense is struggling, DeBerg can make the situation worse.

Mike Elkins also might figure into this equation. He was a No. 2 draft pick in 1989, but spent the first 11 weeks of the season on injured reserve.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.0**

RUNNING BACKS

Christian Okoye entered the NFL as a one-of-a-kind prospect in 1987. He was a 6-1, 255-pound fullback who ran a 4.48 40-yard dash. Three years later, accomplishment caught up with promise, when Okoye led the NFL in carries (370), yards (1,480) and 100-yard games (8) last season and led the AFC in touchdowns (12).

Okoye, a native of Nigeria, is entering only his seventh season of football. What he lacks in experience he makes up in pure power. He is a strong inside runner who will carry tacklers on his back, plus fight for extra yards. He has a good burst to the hole and is a load coming through, preferring to run over tacklers rather than around them. Okoye doesn't make the first tackler miss on a regular basis and also runs high at times. At his size, you don't expect any real hard cuts. Yet, he displays a smooth change of direction and is starting to see daylight and run to it.

Herman Heard complements Okoye at halfback. He's an effective runner outside the tackles. A slasher who makes good decisions, Heard sets up his blockers well *and*

can hit the crease with a burst. Arm tackles won't bring him down. He doesn't have much wiggle, but boasts good balance and can make a tackler miss.

James Saxon spells both Okoye and Heard, but he lacks the speed to be a halfback and the size to be a fullback. Though he's not going to break the long one, he'll hammer away inside and pick up the short yardage. Kevin Harmon (Seattle, Plan B) moves and catches well, and could stick.

GRADE (max. 10): 7.5

DEFENSIVE LINE Bill Maas didn't have a career year for the Chiefs in 1989 — but three linemates did. Maas, a two-time Pro Bowl nose tackle, missed the final six games with a broken arm and failed to post a sack for the first time in his six-year career. Conversely, end Neil Smith, the No. 2 overall pick of the 1988 draft who had a disappointing rookie year, collected 7½ sacks and tied for the team lead by forcing four fumbles in 1989. Nose tackle Danny Saleaumua, a Plan B find, filled in for Maas and led the team in takeaways with five fumble recoveries and an interception. End Leonard Griffin, who finally pushed aging Mike Bell out of a job, had 6½ sacks and was named the AFC Defensive Player of the Week once.

Maas wasn't as effective in the Schottenheimer scheme — lining up a yard off the ball — as he was playing face-mask-to-facemask with the center in his Pro Bowl years. A big, physical player, he likes to roughhouse and overpower opponents — something he can't do when he starts an arm's length away. Maas excels at the point of attack. He also is one of the best pass-rushing nose tackles in the NFL. He has the quickness to get on the center's shoulder and make penetration. His one flaw is that he spends too much time on the ground.

Smith is a beeline-type player — he comes hard and straight. He has good speed but doesn't always use it. He can stand in against the one-on-one drive block and uses his long arms to keep blockers off his body. But he's tight in his upper body and does not hold up against bigger blockers. He also has problems with misdirections and traps. A power rusher with an excellent outside move, Smith has not developed a good inside counter and is still refining his techniques.

Griffin is an adequate run defender with a pumped-up upper body and not much leg drive. He understands blocking schemes and makes the proper reads. But he would rather use his athletic ability to make plays than slug it out with blockers. He is vulnerable to draws and has problems with a short pass set. Quick upfield, he gets his sacks when he beats the blocker to the corner.

Saleaumua is athletic with quickness in tight quarters. He is strong at the point of attack and plays with leverage. He likes to arm-rip in his pass rush, and the Chiefs occasionally drop him into coverage. Bell, who entered the league in 1979 as an explosive pass rusher, now is more effective against the run. **GRADE (max. 10): 7.5**

LINEBACKERS For the first time in their history, the Chiefs used their first-round pick on an outside linebacker when they drafted Derrick Thomas in 1989. Not only did he play like a first-round draft pick, he played like an All-Pro — which he was. Thomas was the only rookie selected to start for the AFC in the Pro Bowl.

Thomas is a big-play 'backer in the mold of Cornelius Bennett, his predecessor at Alabama. The defense features him, and he led the Chiefs in sacks last year with 10. A tremendous speed rusher, Thomas started developing a secondary, inside move late in the season. But he still needs to learn to use his hands more. Against the run, he has the strength to hold up at the point of attack. He can shed a block and come off with a burst. But bigger tackles control him and he has problems when teams run right at him. When they run to the other side, Thomas provides great backside pursuit.

Hard-working journeyman Chris Martin was a surprise at the other outside linebacker, finishing second on the team in tackles. He's a good athlete with agility and speed. He can out-quick a blocker at the line and make the play, but he struggles against a power running game because of his size (6-2, 232). Physical players knock him around. Martin is a sneaky blitzer and demonstrated good range in pass coverage last year.

Inside 'backer Dino Hackett plays with almost incessant intensity. An explosive hitter with excellent awareness and anticipation, he can step into a hole and stuff blockers or use his good wheels to sweep sideline to sideline. His only significant liability has to do with his aggressiveness. He tends to overrun plays.

Fellow inside linebacker Walker Lee Ashley has good instincts and agility, but he tries to read backfield keys rather than line keys. He lacks height (6-0) so he has trouble seeing into the backfield, which slows his reaction time. He also doesn't hold up at the point of attack on a consistent basis. He lets blockers into his body and can't get the bigger people off him. Ashley is strictly a run defender.

Backup inside linebacker Rob McGovern is a smart, tough overachiever who isn't easily fooled. Backup outside linebacker Louis Cooper isn't very quick or strong, but he has some pass-rush ability.

GRADE (max. 10): 7.0

DEFENSIVE BACKS The Chiefs completed their defensive backfield grand slam in 1989 with the selection of cornerback Kevin Ross to the Pro Bowl. The Chiefs now have a Pro Bowl performer at all four spots in their secondary — Ross and Albert Lewis at cornerback and Deron Cherry and Lloyd Burruss at safety.

Lewis and Ross give the Chiefs the game's best cornerback tandem. Ross is small, tough and emotional while Lewis is tall, fluid and stoic. Ross is very physical and excels at the press, mugging receivers at the line. He reads quarterback drops well and has good ball awareness. Although not a blazer in coverage, he has quick feet, first-rate body control and above-average closing speed. Ross plays with superb anticipation, but sometimes he'll guess and get fooled by double-move routes. He also loses receivers downfield.

Lewis, perhaps the premier cornerback in the game, is a high-cut athlete with better long speed than quickness. He is better off the ball than he is at the line. Very nifty for a tall (6-2) corner, he can stay in man coverage all over the field. Lewis has little wasted motion, great closing speed and even better recovery speed. He has more problems with delays and underneath patterns than he does downfield. A penchant for gambling on the big play sometimes gets him in trouble. Like Ross, he's an asset in run support and a good open-field tackler.

Schottenheimer's defensive scheme relies heavily on man-to-man coverage by the cornerbacks, so most passes go outside the hashmarks. That neutralizes Cherry as a centerfielder. He only had two interceptions in 1989 — the fewest in his seven seasons as a starter. Cherry has rare instincts and anticipation. A good ball athlete, he reads the quarterback well and gets to the right place at the right time — yet he's more quick than fast. In run support, he comes up aggressively and tackles fairly well.

Burruss plays more like a linebacker than a safety. He'll come up and fill the lane, but he's playing softer than he did in his 1987 Pro Bowl year. Age (32) has slowed him down and he's not delivering the TKO-type shots anymore. While Burruss has good instincts and can cover, he lacks acceleration and is not fluid in his turns. Kevin Porter, the other strong safety, is fearless and will make the big hit. He has a burst to the ball but is not a reliable open-field tackler. As a former college corner, he has man-to-man coverage abilities. However, he has a knack of making the big error in zone coverage.

Backup corner Jayice Pearson has good feet and is a secure tackler but lacks the speed to cover the top-flight receivers. **GRADE (max. 10): 9.0**

SPECIAL TEAMS Nick Lowery had a great decade for the Chiefs, scoring more points (1,006) than any other NFL player in the 1980s. He set a league record for most career 50-yard field goals (18) and also established himself as the most accurate kicker in NFL history (converting 77.3 percent of his career field goal tries). But the decade was kinder to him than his 1989 season. Lowery missed nine field goal tries — his most one-season failures since 1984 — and also missed his first extra-point attempt since 1983. In addition, his kickoffs rarely reach the end zone any more. The Chiefs signed a kicker (Bjorn Nittmo) in Plan B to keep Lowery on his toes.

Punter Kelly Goodburn had a productive season with 25 punts inside the 20, only five touchbacks and a career-best 33.8-yard net average. He's also a threat to run out of punt formation. But the Chiefs are in dire need of a quality return specialist. They were among the worst in the NFL in both punt returns (7.5 yards) and kickoff returns (17.6 yards) last season. Coverage-wise, the Chiefs figure to improve in 1990 with the return of injured linebacker Angelo Snipes and a host of new Plan B players.

GRADE (max. 10): 6.0

COACHING/ ORGANIZATION Carl Peterson has not had a losing season in the eight years he has been in charge of a professional football team's personnel department (general manager of the Chiefs in 1989, general manager of the USFL Philadelphia Stars from 1983-85, player personnel director of the Philadelphia Eagles from 1978-81). Marty Schottenheimer has not had a losing season in the five full seasons he has been an NFL head coach (Chiefs in 1989, Cleveland Browns from 1985-88). Peterson is a hard-line negotiator who alienated some (Lewis, Ross among others) of his top performers during the offseason. Still, when it comes to evaluating talent he knows what a player looks like and Schottenheimer knows how to coach them. That combination figures to benefit the Chiefs for years to come. **GRADE (max. 10): 7.5**

DRAFT The Chiefs' only real concession to a glaring need for more offensive dash was Jones. He has adequate stopwatch numbers (4.51), enough flash to separate deep and the open-field skills to deliver happy endings after the catch. They bolstered their No. 2-rated defense with run-stuffing linebacker Snow, their second straight Butkus Award winner (following Derrick Thomas in '89). He was a tackling machine in the MSU scheme with 463 in three college seasons. The 292-pound Grunhard, great straight ahead but needing work on pass blocking, will compete for a guard spot. He's the heir apparent to ancient center Mike Webster. Graham, at 305, needs to tighten up his body and techniques. Sims could figure at nose tackle if veteran Bill Maas switches to defensive end.

GRADE (max. 10): 6.0

1990 DRAFT round number (pick in round; overall sequence): 1. (15,13) PERCY SNOW, LB, Michigan State; 2. (15,40) TIM GRUNHARD, C, Notre Dame; 4. (15,96) FRED JONES, WR, Grambling State; 5. (15,124) DERRICK GRAHAM, DT, Appalachian State; 5. (18,127) KEN HACKEMACK, DT, Texas; 6. (15,152) TOM SIMS, DT, Pittsburgh; 7. (15,180) DAVE SZOTT, OG, Penn State; 9. (15,235) MICHAEL OWENS, RB, Syracuse; 10. (15,263) CRAIG HUDSON, TE, Wisconsin; 11. (15,291) ERNEST THOMPSON, RB, Georgia Southern; 12. (15,318) TONY JEFFERY, WR, San Jose State.

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VETERANS ROSTER

NO.	NAME	POS.	HT.	WT.	BIRTH-DATE	COLLEGE	NFL EXP.
76	Alt, J.	T	6-7	300	5/30/62	Iowa	7
54	Ashley, W.L.	LB	6-0	231	7/28/60	Penn State	7
77	Baldinger, R.	G-T	6-4	292	12/31/59	Wake Forest	9
99	Bell, M.	DE	6-4	262	8/30/57	Colorado State	10
34	Burruss, L.	S	6-0	205	10/31/57	Maryland	10
20	Cherry, D.	FS	5-11	202	9/12/59	Rutgers	10
62	Chilton, G.	C-G	6-3	286	3/27/64	Texas	4
55	Cooper, L.	LB	6-2	238	8/5/63	Western Carolina	6
25	Copeland, D.	S	6-2	210	1/24/66	Eastern Kentucky	2
17	DeBerg, S.	QB	6-3	214	1/9/54	San Jose State	14
42	*Donaldson, J.	S	6-0	190	4/19/62	Colorado	7
75	Eatman, I.	T	6-7	298	1/1/61	UCLA	5
10	Elkins, M.	QB	6-3	225	7/20/66	Wake Forest	2
2	Goodburn, K.	P	6-2	201	4/14/62	Emporia State	4
49	*Griffin, J.	S	6-2	203	9/7/61	Middle Tenn. State	8
98	Griffin, L.	DE	6-4	272	9/22/62	Grambling	5
56	Hackett, D.	LB	6-3	228	6/28/64	Appalachian State	5
26	*Harmon, K.	RB	6-0	190	10/26/65	Iowa	3
73	Harris, M.	D-G	6-4	306	8/30/66	Grambling	2
86	Harry, E.	WR	5-11	178	4/5/63	Stanford	4
85	Hayes, J.	TE	6-5	254	8/11/62	Iowa	6
44	Heard, H.	RB	5-10	194	11/24/61	Southern Colorado	7
7	Jaworski, R.	QB	6-1	202	3/23/51	Youngstown State	16
91	*Jones, R.	TE	6-4	245	3/3/64	Washington	4
29	Lewis, A.	CB	6-2	198	10/6/60	Grambling	8
8	Lowery, N.	K	6-4	189	5/27/56	Dartmouth	11
72	Lutz, D.	G-T	6-6	303	12/30/59	Georgia Tech	8
63	Maas, B.	NT-DE	6-5	277	12/19/60	Pittsburgh	7
89	Mandley, P.	WR	5-10	195	7/29/61	Northern Arizona	7
57	Martin, C.	LB	6-2	232	12/19/60	Auburn	8
50	McGovern, R.	LB	6-2	223	10/1/66	Holy Cross	2
69	Meisner, G.	DE-NT	6-3	271	4/23/59	Pittsburgh	10
9	*Nittmo, B.	K	5-11	179	7/26/66	Appalachian State	2
35	Okoye, C.	RB	6-1	260	8/16/61	Azusa Pacific	4
83	Paige, S.	WR	6-2	185	10/15/61	Fresno State	8
24	Pearson, J.	CB	5-11	185	8/17/63	Washington	5
11	Pelluer, S.	QB	6-4	212	7/29/62	Washington	7
27	Porter, K.	S	5-10	219	4/11/66	Auburn	3
87	Roberts, A.	TE	6-3	246	3/1/65	Miami (Fla.)	3
31	Ross, K.	CB	5-9	182	1/16/62	Temple	7
97	Saleaumua, D.	NT	6-0	289	11/11/65	Arizona State	4
21	Saxon, J.	RB	5-11	215	3/23/66	San Jose State	3
90	Smith, N.	DE	6-4	271	4/10/66	Nebraska	3
52	Snipes, A.	LB	6-0	228	1/11/63	West Georgia	4
58	Thomas, D.	LB	6-3	234	1/1/67	Alabama	2
81	Thomas, R.	WR	5-11	171	3/39/66	Oregon State	2
19	*Ware, T.	WR	5-10	175	4/2/63	Southern Cal	4
53	Webster, M.	C	6-2	260	3/18/52	Wisconsin	17
65	*Winters, F.	C-G	6-3	280	1/23/64	Western Illinois	4
84	Worthen, N.	WR	5-8	177	3/27/66	N.C. State	2

* Plan B free agent

DENVER BRONCOS

1989 RECORD: 11-5 HEAD COACH: DAN REEVES STADIUM: MILE HIGH (76,243)

The Broncos may one day win a Super Bowl. . .if the NFL ever decides to play the game in Denver. The Broncos have lost an AFC-record four Super Bowls to four different NFC opponents — a futility punctuated in January by the most lopsided defeat in Super Bowl history.

The Broncos were designated as the home team in that Super Bowl at the New Orleans Superdome against the San Francisco 49ers. But the Broncos weren't fooled. With a dome over their heads, artificial turf under their feet and air conditioning in their lungs, they knew they weren't playing back home in the mountains. So they performed like out-of-towners, getting hammered by the 49ers, 55-10.

Had the Broncos played that game — or any of their four Super Bowls, for that matter — in Denver, it is doubtful they would rank with the Minnesota Vikings for super ineptitude. The Broncos were the NFL's best home team in the 1980s, winning 63 of their 83 regular and postseason games at Mile High Stadium. No one else in the NFL won as many as 60 games at home in the decade.

Those annual 7-1 and 6-2 home records give the Broncos a tremendous jump on the rest of the AFC and help them stay home for the playoffs. That usually translates into Super Bowls. The Broncos posted a 5-1 home playoff record in the 1980s and went to an AFC-high three Super Bowls. Having figured out how to get there, the Broncos now must discover a way to win after they arrive.

WIDE RECEIVERS/ TIGHT END

Just as Phil Collins split from Genesis for a successful solo singing career, Vance Johnson split from Denver's Three Amigos last season with a splash solo act. He became the first Bronco to catch 70 passes in a season since 1964, and his 76 receptions were almost 50 more than team runnerup and former Amigo Mark Jackson. Johnson is the fastest and most polished of the Denver wideouts. He feasts on bump coverage and, as a result, is generally the hot receiver on blitzes. Johnson, who hits full speed in a hurry, excels at double moves and is difficult to tail when he crosses the formation. Although he is not afraid to go inside, a good lick early has him hearing footsteps late.

Ricky Nattiel, the other former Amigo, can stay with Johnson in a foot race and is physically tougher. But he doesn't read coverages as well as Johnson, and he's coming off a knee injury that forced him to miss eight games last year. Jackson isn't as fast as either Johnson or Nattiel but has as much quickness and explosion. He understands levels of speed and can make the sudden bursts for separation. A clever route-runner, Jackson is the club's most reliable receiver in traffic. He's also the target John Elway looks for on scrambles when the play crumbles. Jackson's feet are his strength. He's shifty and makes tacklers miss. He doesn't always adjust to the poorly thrown ball, though, and will drop some.

Michael Young, a 1989 Plan B addition, is a Steve Watson clone — a possession receiver who runs the meticulous intermediate patterns. His best route is the corner, in which he does an excellent job of first selling the post. But Young runs high and lacks a second gear. Defenders can get on his hip and ride him because he lacks long separation.

The only tight end the Broncos protected in Plan B was Orson Mobley. Despite his size (6-5, 259), Mobley is a better receiver than blocker. Safeties can't match up with his bulk and linebackers can't match up with his speed. He pushes defenders around, outmuscles them for the ball and is a load for any one tackler. He likes the corner and flat routes, and the Broncos use him to pick defenders in man coverage. As a blocker, Denver will motion Mobley and have him trap inside the tackles. But he is not an intense blocker and doesn't always finish the job. Chris Verhulst (Houston, Plan B) won't help the running game, but can catch the ball. **GRADE** (max. 10): **8.0**

OFFENSIVE LINE

John Elway is no longer the happy wanderer. He stayed in the pocket more in 1989 than in any of his previous five seasons as the starting quarterback, rushing only 48 times. The reason? He no longer has to run for his life. Coach Dan Reeves finally surrounded Elway with blockers bigger than he is. Gone are the smaller, finesse linemen of previous Super Bowl teams, and in their place are mammoth mashers. The heaviest player on the Bronco offensive line in Super Bowl XXII weighed 270 pounds. The lightest linemen for the Broncos in Super Bowl XXIV weighed 270 pounds.

Heaviest on the scale is left tackle Gerald Perry, who goes 6-6, 305 pounds. But the trade-off for all that size is his inexperience. Only a two-year veteran with a small-school background, Perry is still learning pass-blocking techniques and the proper angles. Better versus the power rushers than the quick upfield types, Perry mirrors and copies well. However, his ability to redirect is only fair, and once he locks into his pass set, he's vulnerable to a second move. As a run blocker, Perry gets movement off the ball and knocks people around. His ability to sustain his blocks is only average.

Left guard Jim Juriga (6-6, 275) also lacks experience. Although drafted in 1986, he spent his first two seasons on injured reserve. He started at left tackle in 1988, but was shifted to left guard in 1989 and found his niche there. Smart and competitive, Juriga has the size and strength to handle bigger interior defenders and is agile enough to engage the linebackers. He isn't particularly quick straight ahead, but knows how to set up his blocks and is adept in combination. Though somewhat stiff in pass protection, Juriga plays with leverage and uses his hands well.

Doug Widell (6-4, 287) has a bright future at the other guard. A No. 2 draft pick in 1989, Widell has ideal temperament and techniques in addition to size. He has tremendous upper-body strength to the point of being top-heavy, but plays with a good base and leverage. He jolts folks on his drive blocks and sustains them. Surprisingly nifty, Widell can pull and hit a moving target. In addition, he uses his hands and arms well in pass protection. He has some problems with speed rushers, though.

Center Keith Kartz (6-4, 270) also is a converted tackle who relies more on strength and intelligence than natural ability. He is an alert player with a solid work ethic. A better pass blocker than run blocker, Karch has good arm length and hand punch. On run blocks, he's proficient in combination schemes but lacks explosion and body control when isolated on a nose tackle.

Right tackle Ken Lanier (6-3, 290) is the lone holdover up front from Super Bowls XXI and XXII and remains Denver's best, most consistent lineman. He is a load on his drive blocks and also gets into good positions on combination and zone blocks. Blessed with fine athletic ability, Lanier has good body control and can block on the move. In addition, he's quick-footed and savvy in pass protection. He can, however, be beaten on a hard upfield rush. He's also a bit slow getting into the backside block.

Keith Bishop, whom Widell replaced in the lineup, is a hard-nosed player with more toughness and determination than ability. He will do anything — cut, roll, hold, clip — to neutralize his man. He is better in tight quarters than in space. **GRADE** (max. 10): **6.5**

QUARTERBACK

John Elway is being categorized these days with former Viking Fran Tarkenton. So what's wrong with that? Sure, Tarkenton was 0-3 in Super Bowls — but he's also a member of the Pro Football Hall of Fame. Elway is 0-3 in Super Bowls, and he too appears destined for Canton. His physical tools match those of any quarterback in the Hall and despite his three super losses, he is a leader and big-play maker.

Elway has a cannon arm and quick release. Like Tarkenton, he makes things happen with his legs. He can escape pressure and no one throws better on the move. Particularly dangerous running in one direction and throwing with velocity in the other, Elway makes big plays out of broken ones. Defenses would prefer he anchor in the pocket, so he often is subjected to more deliberate, contain-type pass rushes. When forced to stay home, Elway is not a Hall of Fame quarterback. He struggles with touch passes and pressure bothers him. Fenced in, he throws early and loses his accuracy. He also threw more off his back foot in 1989 than in previous years. Although Elway is reading coverages better, he still relies too much on his arm strength to squeeze passes where they don't belong.

His backup, Gary Kubiak, lacks Elway's arm and big-play ability. He has a quick release and can float the touch passes Elway can't. But he is a caretaker quarterback who needs the running game to function. He can't disguise the weaknesses in the offense like Elway. Kubiak can move around in the pocket and buy time for himself, but he has trouble seeing because of his height (6-0).

GRADE (max. 10): **8.0**

RUNNING BACKS

Elway had a lackluster season in 1989 by his standards, passing for only 3,051 yards and 18 touchdowns. But with Bobby Humphrey lining up in the backfield with him, Elway didn't need to carry the Broncos as he had done in the past. Humphrey became only the fifth player in club history to rush for 1,000 yards and it was he — not Elway — who was selected offensive MVP of the Broncos.

Humphrey is a north-south runner who doesn't go down without a fight. He is capable of long runs but is not really a breakaway threat with his 4.6 speed. A cutback runner in the Marcus Allen mold, he has the vision to spot a crease and the burst to get through it. He sets up his blocks well and breaks tackles. But Humphrey is a better runner in the "I" than in split-backs, and he gets careless with the ball at times. He had a reputation at Alabama as a turf back, but all five of his 100-yard games last year came on grass. Although his hands are only average, the Broncos like to feed him shovel passes.

Fullback Melvin Bratton entered the NFL last year with an injury flag. Coming out of the University of Miami in 1988, he was a potential No. 1 draft pick with a fullback body, halfback speed and receiver hands. But a knee injury in his final college game cost him some of that speed and a year of his professional career. He rehabilitated in 1988, went back into the draft in 1989 and become a seventh-round steal for the Broncos. He is a strong, cutback runner but neither reads nor adjusts to defenses. He's not as physical as he was in college, but in time he will be. His primary contributions are as a lead blocker — Bratton's a load banging up ahead of Humphrey — and as a receiver. He runs excellent routes, a tribute to his college training at Miami.

Although listed as a running back, Steve Sewell is more of a receiver. He'll run draws and the occasional sweep, but at 6-3 he's a long strider who takes time to get going. Sewell is a big-play receiver, however, catching passes in his career of 72, 68, 56 and 48 yards. The Broncos like to scoot him up the deep middle in short-yardage situations. Though he lacks the speed to accelerate away from defensive backs, he has good hands and will extend his arms away from his body to make the tough catch.

Longtime starting halfback Sammy Winder lacks flash but not productivity. He's a better inside runner and has good vision plus pick and slide. Winder lacks speed but breaks tackles and does a nice job on draws and screens. Lorenzo Hampton (Plan B, Miami) can still block and could fill a backup role. **GRADE** (max. 10): **7.0**

DEFENSIVE LINE In 1988, the Broncos couldn't stop the run. They ranked 27th in the league in run defense and were battered for an NFL-high in 100-yard rushing games (10). But Denver picked up two former No. 1 draft picks who were supposedly on the slide, Alphonso Carreker and Ron Holmes, and the defensive front made a complete turnaround. The Broncos climbed to sixth in the NFL in run defense and were the only AFC team which did not permit a 100-yard rusher in 1989.

Carreker, who was left unprotected by Green Bay in Plan B, is a solid run player at left end. A good two-gap lineman, he plays with leverage, keeps blockers off his body and controls the point of attack. But Carreker does not move well laterally and goes to the ground too much. He is a methodical inside pass rusher without the speed or quickness to get upfield.

Holmes, acquired on the eve of the 1989 season in a trade with Tampa Bay, gave the Broncos a pass-rush threat from his right end spot, racking up a career-high nine sacks. He can twist, spin and bull rush with effectiveness, but he prefers to use his speed to the corner and then counter underneath. Holmes is good in traffic and makes plays on the move, but the better offensive tackles stand him up and knock him back at the point of attack. He also tends to run out of steam in the fourth quarter.

Nose tackle Greg Kragen plays hard and resists pressure. But he lacks the size and strength to hold up against bigger people and struggles against teams that run right at him. Despite his limitations, he was voted to his first Pro Bowl in 1989. Kragen gives great effort. He has quickness, solid techniques and is rarely on the ground, which keeps him alive on plays. He likes to slap and spin in his pass rush and is productive on stunts.

Andre Townsend, displaced as a starter by Holmes, is another undersized Bronco who doesn't hold up at the point of attack. His arms collapse and blockers get into his body. He lacks quickness, but he's an intelligent player and moves well laterally. End Warren Powers, a second-round pick in 1989, is huge (6-6, 287) but raw. He hasn't yet learned how to use his size to advantage.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.0**

LINEBACKERS The Broncos brought in new defensive players, a new coordinator (Wade Phillips) and a new system last season. But there was one constant — Karl Mecklenburg, standing in the middle of it all at linebacker, playing at a Pro Bowl level. He remains the leader of the defense. He takes on and defeats blocks, avoiding ground clutter along the way. His technique is sound and he doesn't waste steps. Ultra-instinctive, Mecklenburg can run to the corner and also make plays in backside pursuit. When he rushes in nickel situations, usually from a three-point stance, he relies on quickness. His one limitation is that he's not particularly nifty in space.

Simon Fletcher

Rick Dennison, who plays with Mecklenburg in the middle, has made 100 tackles each of the last two seasons — but also has not been protected by the Broncos in Plan B in either season. Basically, he's too small to play inside (6-3, 220). He gets overwhelmed by guards. On the plus side, he runs well and has canny diagnostic ability.

Michael Brooks may be the best strongside linebacker in the NFL nobody knows about. He is the No. 1 athlete and perhaps the best player on the Denver defense. Quick and physical, Brooks is a strong run defender who can control blockers. He's also smooth in traffic and can turn his hips and run in coverage. Though Brooks doesn't blitz much, he likes to butt and rip when he does.

Simon Fletcher on the other side is the blitzer. He led the Broncos with 12 sacks last season. Used up and down, he has long arms and strong hands and puts his good mobility in gear on stunts and twists. Against the run, Fletcher has excellent size and comes off blocks quickly. But he doesn't protect his long legs from cut blocks and he isn't particularly physical. He's more of a grabber than a tackler.

Marc Munford alternates with Dennison, but he also lacks the size (6-2, 231) and strength to mix it up inside. He's a technique player who makes good decisions and tackles.

GRADE (max. 10): **7.0**

DEFENSIVE BACKS The Broncos have two linebacker types lining up at safety in Dennis Smith and Steve Atwater. Strong safety Smith goes 6-3, 200 and free safety Atwater 6-3, 217. Both pride themselves on their hitting ability. But Smith's best years are behind him. He does not have the range he once had and gets swallowed up in man coverage. Although he still makes the big hit, he no longer has great closing speed. Smith — a tuned-in, intimidating presence — still supports the run as well as any safety west of Cincinnati's David Fulcher.

Atwater's best years are ahead of him. He's smart, has good range in zone coverages, and is quick to support. He also has a knack for blitzing. While he runs well and has quick feet, he can get turned around in man coverage. Plus, his hands are borderline.

Cornerback is the soft spot of the Denver defense. Tyrone Braxton and Wymon Henderson are strictly zone defenders. Braxton moves easily, reads the quarterback well and has a burst to the ball. He plays more carefree than anyone in the secondary, but is a little slow coming out of his backpedal. Braxton does a good job on the press and has closing speed on downfield routes. He also plays with a bit of a swagger — his confidence takes him where his skills do not.

Henderson lacks both the closing speed and a burst for man coverage, but he is a disciplined zone player. He doesn't get jumpy and he forces the offense to beat the coverage, not him. Henderson has quick feet and can turn and run out of a backpedal, but quarterbacks can throw in front of him all day. In run support he is willing and steady.

Cornerback Darren Carrington is the fastest man in the secondary but lacks experience and guesses a lot. Backup free safety Kip Corrington limits his mistakes, but he doesn't run very well, nor does he hold up physically.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.5**

SPECIAL TEAMS Punter Mike Horan went to the 1989 Pro Bowl and kicker David Treadwell went to the 1990 Pro Bowl. The Detroit Lions are the only other NFL team to have sent both their kickers to Hawaii in recent years. Treadwell, who failed in his first tryout with the Broncos in 1988, returned last season to lead the AFC in field goals (27) and scoring (120 points). But he doesn't have a long leg. He was only 3 of 8 from outside 40 yards. He also lacks depth on his kickoffs. Horan dropped almost 4 yards from his 1988 Pro Bowl average (44.0), but he still had a fine season with 24 punts inside the 20 and a 34.3 net average.

The Broncos did a great job in kickoff coverage last season, ranking in the top five with a yield of 17.4 yards a return, but were a disaster in punt coverage. In their own return game, the Broncos have big-play capability with either Vance Johnson or Ricky Nattiel on punts. Ken Bell, however, doesn't threaten on kickoffs.

GRADE (max. 10): **7.5**

COACHING/ ORGANIZATION Denver boasts one of the few NFL situations in which one man calls the shots in both personnel and coaching — and the team benefits from that monarchy. As the club's vice president, Dan Reeves has built and coached the Broncos into a perennial Super Bowl contender. He can put on his coaching hat and pinpoint an area of weakness. Then he can put on his personnel hat and patch that area. He handles both facets skillfully.

GRADE (max. 10): **8.0**

DRAFT That 49ers' Super Bowl crunching convinced the Broncos their third-ranked defense needed more clout, so they tapped two All-Southwest Conference hitters. Strong safety Montgomery may eventually become Dennis Smith's replacement, but the initial plan is to use him at corner. That could be a tough transition because he lacks the requisite speed for man coverage. His aggressiveness also contributes to poor decisions at times. Linebacker Robinson has the right size/speed ratio, but must develop the smarts and better reactions. He could help on special teams while trying to switch from inside to outside. Offensive lineman Davidson has the beef but stiff actions and slow feet may betray him. Sharpe has tight end size (6-1, 221), and as a collegian fashioned three consecutive 1,000-yard seasons with 40 touchdowns. Ellis, a ninth-rounder, threw passes to Sharpe's brother, Green Bay Pro Bowl wideout Sterling, when both were at South Carolina.

GRADE (max. 10): **3.5**

1990 DRAFT round number (pick in round; overall sequence): 1. USED IN SUP. DRAFT TO PICK BOBBY HUMPHREY; 2. (27,52) ALTON MONTGOMERY, DB, Houston; 4. (1,82) JEROY ROBINSON, LB, Texas A&M; 5. (2,111) JEFF DAVIDSON, G, Ohio State; 5. (27,136) LE-LO LANG, DB, Washington; 6. (27,164) RONNIE HALIBURTON, TE, Louisiana State; 7. (27,192) SHANNON SHARPE, WR, Savannah State; 8. (27,219) BRAD LEGGETT, C, Southern California; 9. (27,247) TODD ELLIS, QB, South Carolina; 10. (11,259) JAMES SZYMANSKI, DE, Michigan State; 10. (27,275) ANTHONY THOMPSON, LB, East Carolina.

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VETERANS ROSTER

NO.	NAME	POS.	HT.	WT.	BIRTH-DATE	COLLEGE	NFL EXP.
57	*Allert, T.	LB	6-2	238	7/23/63	Texas	5
27	Atwater, S.	S	6-3	213	10/28/66	Arkansas	2
35	Bell, K.	RB	5-10	190	11/16/64	Boston College	5
54	Bishop, K.	C-G	6-3	290	3/10/57	Baylor	10
32	Bratton, M.	RB	6-1	225	2/2/65	Miami (Fla.)	2
34	Braxton, T.	CB	5-11	185	12/17/64	North Dakota State	4
56	Brooks, M.	LB	6-1	235	10/2/64	Louisiana State	4
92	Carreker, A.	DE	6-6	272	5/25/62	Florida State	7
29	Carrington, D.	CB	6-1	189	10/10/66	Northern Arizona	2
25	Corrington, K.	S	6-0	175	4/12/65	Texas A&M	2
55	Dennison, R.	LB	6-3	220	6/22/58	Colorado State	9
7	Elway, J.	QB	6-3	215	6/28/60	Stanford	8
73	Fletcher, S.	LB	6-5	240	2/18/62	Houston	6
69	Hamilton, D.	T	6-5	298	5/11/65	North Carolina	2
20	*Hampton, L.	RB	5-11	208	3/12/62	Florida	6
24	Henderson, W.	CB	5-9	186	12/15/61	Nevada-Las Vegas	4
68	Henke, B.	DE	6-3	275	4/10/66	Arizona	2
90	Holmes, R.	DE	6-4	265	8/26/63	Washington	6
2	Horan, M.	P	5-11	190	2/1/59	Long Beach State	7
26	Humphrey, B.	RB	6-1	201	10/11/66	Alabama	2
80	Jackson, M.	WR	5-9	180	7/23/63	Purdue	5
81	*Johnson, J.	WR	5-10	178	11/8/65	Illinois State	3
82	Johnson, V.	WR	5-11	185	3/13/63	Arizona	6
66	Juriga, J.	G-T	6-6	275	9/12/64	Illinois	3
72	Kartz, K.	C	6-4	270	5/5/63	California	4
88	Kay, C.	TE	6-2	237	7/30/61	Georgia	7
71	Kragen, G.	NT	6-3	265	3/4/62	Utah State	6
8	Kubiak, G.	QB	6-0	192	8/15/61	Texas A&M	8
76	Lanier, K.	T	6-3	290	7/8/59	Florida State	10
98	*Little, D.	TE	6-2	226	4/18/61	Middle Tenn. State	7
97	*Mraz, M.	DE	6-4	260	2/9/65	Utah State	3
96	McCullough, J.	DE	6-5	270	7/23/65	Clemson	2
77	Mecklenburg, K.	LB	6-3	240	9/1/60	Minnesota	8
89	Mobley, O.	TE	6-5	259	3/4/63	Salem College	5
51	Munford, M.	LB	6-2	231	2/14/65	Nebraska	4
84	Nattiel, R.	WR	5-9	180	1/25/66	Florida	4
60	Perry, G.	T	6-6	305	11/12/64	Southern U.	3
91	Powers, W.	DE	6-6	287	2/4/65	Maryland	2
48	Robbins, R.	S	6-2	189	9/14/62	Arizona	7
30	Sewell, S.	RB	6-3	210	4/2/63	Oklahoma	6
49	Smith, D.	S	6-3	200	2/3/59	Southern Cal	10
28	*Smith, E.	DB	6-2	192	8/14/67	Alcorn State	2
50	*Stephens, R.	LB	6-1	237	6/14/66	Georgia Tech	2
61	Townsend, A.	DE-NT	6-3	265	10/8/62	Mississippi	7
9	Treadwell, D.	K	6-1	175	2/27/67	Clemson	2
86	*Verhulst, C.	TE	6-2	249	5/16/66	Cal State-Chico	3
70	*White, R.	DE	6-4	270	5/26/65	South Dakota	3
67	Widell, D.	G	6-4	287	9/23/66	Boston College	2
23	Winder, S.	RB	5-11	203	7/15/59	Southern Miss	9
83	Young, M.	WR	6-1	183	2/21/62	UCLA	6

*Plan B free agent

LOS ANGELES RAIDERS

1989 RECORD: 8-8 HEAD COACH: ART SHELL STADIUM: LA MEMORIAL COLISEUM (92,448)

Al Davis could hardly recognize his Raiders. They were no longer winning Super Bowls, no longer winning division championships. For that matter, they were no longer winning games — losing to such former whipping boys as the Chiefs, Falcons and Saints. So Davis decided to play a shell game.

As in Art Shell.

In an attempt to restore familiarity to his football team, Davis fired outsider Mike Shanahan last October after only 20 games as head coach and replaced him with insider Shell. The new coach was schooled the Raiders way. He played 15 years at offensive tackle for the Raiders and had been instrumental in the execution of basic, power football that produced nine division titles and two Super Bowls in his career.

The Raiders had abandoned that brand of football under Shanahan, becoming more scheme-oriented. Twelve losses in Shanahan's 20 games reaffirmed Davis' belief that players and matchups win, not schemes. So Shanahan was out and Shell in. Basic football was back. And so too, apparently, are the good times. Shell guided the Raiders to a 7-5 finish. Counting Shanahan's 1-3 slate, the Raiders wound up 8-8, their first non-losing season in three years. That .500 finish came despite the absence of star running back Bo Jackson for the first five games (baseball) and star wideout Tim Brown for the last 15 games (knee injury).

WIDE RECEIVERS/ TIGHT END

The early loss of Tim Brown was a devastating blow to the Raiders. Gone from the lineup was his 4.35 speed. Gone were the 2,300 yards the Raiders had received from him as a rookie on receptions, runs and returns. Without him, the Raiders wound up 19th in the NFL in offense and 18th in scoring.

Brown (6-0, 195) has size to go with his speed. Although he still lacks polish as a receiver (he needs to run tighter routes), Brown more than makes up for any deficiencies with his explosive open-field running abilities. The respect his speed commands from cornerbacks makes him effective on out patterns and comebacks, and the Raiders also like getting him the ball on reverses, screens and slants.

Brown and Willie Gault give the Raiders the vertical stretch Davis espouses. Gault, a former Olympic sprinter, has averaged almost 21 yards a catch over his seven NFL seasons. He's more of a long-strider than Brown and picks up speed downfield. Gault has pretty good hands and will go inside, but is a better receiver running the deep fades, posts and comebacks. He has trouble with tight man coverage and roll-up zones, and can be slowed at the line by a cornerback press.

Mervyn Fernandez is a more polished receiver than either Brown or Gault but lacks their speed. Still, he has much better speed than defenders realize, because they subconsciously compare him on tape to Brown and Gault. Although he makes his living as a control receiver, Fernandez can lull a cornerback, then burn him deep. He's at his best on the intermediate routes. At 6-2, 210, Fernandez can muscle open, has good body control, and is fearless going after the ball. He is probably the best eye-hand athlete among the receivers.

Mike Alexander, another possession receiver, is a good target and smooth out of his breaks. He can pluck the ball, but he lacks quickness and has trouble with the press.

Tight end Mike Dyal, a free-agent find in 1988, is a bright prospect. Nifty and quick, he's a smooth route runner with a burst. But he is still learning to read coverages, lacks long speed and drops balls. As a blocker, Dyal uses his quickness to get good position on his blocks, but he tends to overextend and does not sustain.

Backup tight end Ethan Horton broke into the NFL as a running back and has soft hands. He has the athletic ability to beat coverages and runs well after the catch. However, he lacks strength against linebackers and has little blocking technique. School is out on whether he can develop into another Todd Christensen.

GRADE (max. 10): **7.5**

OFFENSIVE LINE

Davis has always liked his skill players fast and his linemen huge. Mission accomplished. The Raiders line up five incumbent starters across the front at 275 pounds or better, including a former first-round draft pick (center Don Mosebar) and two former second-rounders (guard Steve Wisniewski and tackle Bruce Wilkerson). Davis bolstered the line this season with the Plan B signing of guard Max Montoya, who has started in two Super Bowls for the Cincinnati Bengals and also been to two Pro Bowls. At 6-5, 275, he's not exactly a midget. The Bengals tried to slide him through Plan B because of his age (34). Now Davis hopes Montoya can steady his young line. Montoya isn't a Raider-style one-on-one mauler, but he gets good position on his run blocks and finishes what he starts. Excellent balance, good agility and head adjustments have helped make him one of the league's top interior pass blockers.

Wisniewski stepped in at right guard as a rookie last season and was the best athlete on the line. He has the size (6-4, 285), strength and feet to be a Pro Bowl player. Mobile on the pull, quick and tenacious in-line, Wisniewski is a plus run blocker. He prefers a short set in pass protection and can handle slides and stunts. If he gets his hands on his man, he's tough to beat. But he guesses at times and gets off-balance. He also gets whipped by linemen who shade one gap and attack the opposite one.

Mosebar (6-6, 280) is the best center in the division. He could also be one of the better tackles. Though he doesn't rock a nose tackle off the snap, Mosebar is quick, gets good leverage, stays on his feet and competes. Superb in pass protection, he has a short set and makes good reads off the guards.

Left tackle Rory Graves (6-6, 295) isn't a long-term solution. A limited athlete with below-average agility and only fair strength, Graves uses his size and hands to his advantage in pass protection, but gets in trouble when he sets his feet. He won't remind anyone of his mentor (coach Shell) as a run blocker. Right tackle Bruce Wilkerson (6-5, 285) has good strength, feet and quickness, and is developing into a solid NFL player. He makes contact and sustains, but does not overpower as a run blocker. He employs solid techniques in pass protection, but lets defenders into his chest too often.

John Gesek, a starter at left guard last year, has good feet and quickness. He isn't very strong at the point of attack, though. Steve Wright (6-6, 275) has started for the Raiders at both guard and tackle. He developed into a stronger player in 1989 but still has problems with angles and sustaining his blocks. He's a catcher in pass protection and has balance problems.

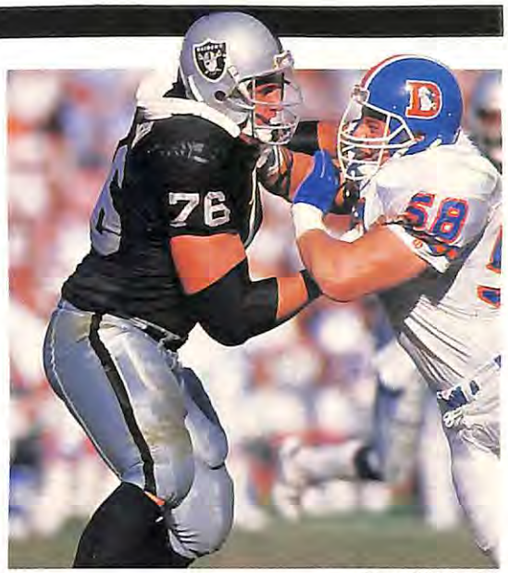
At 300 pounds, James FitzPatrick (Plan B, San Diego) has the size that forces defenders to beat him, but he lacks quickness and has trouble in space.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.0**

QUARTERBACK

Jay Schroeder is custom-made for the downfield style Al Davis likes. He's a strong-armed bomber in the Daryle Lamonica mold. His 70-yard range definitely gives the Raiders quick-strike capability. However, the less-experienced and less-talented Steve Beuerlein has been a more productive quarterback for the Raiders. Even though he started two fewer games than Schroeder last season, Beuerlein threw for more yards (1,677), more touchdowns (13) and fewer interceptions (9) than Schroeder. Beuerlein also had a winning record as a starter (4-3). Schroeder did not (4-5).

Beuerlein, whom some scouts compare to Seattle's Dave



Steve Wisniewski

Krieg, has an average arm but can throw all the passes, including the deep ball. He's best on the intermediate routes and touch stuff, though. And while he has movement in the pocket, he's no threat to run. Because of his relative inexperience, Beuerlein tends to stay with one receiver too long and has trouble picking out secondary targets. But he plays with poise and toughness, and the Raiders respond to his leadership. He finished the 1989 season as the starting quarterback and Schroeder will have to beat him out in 1990.

Schroeder has that capability. He won 24 of his 31 career starts with Washington before being traded to the Raiders in 1988. So he knows how to succeed — he just hasn't done it yet with the Raiders. He has a quick set and release and can throw on the move. He also helps himself with quarterback draws and bootlegs. His strength, however, is the home run ball, and he does a nice job of looking defenders off that pass. On the negative side, Schroeder is slow to read, lacks accuracy and has trouble with the blitz. He has a tendency to hold the ball too long and take sacks. At times, he also forces the ball.

GRADE (max. 10): **4.5**

RUNNING BACKS

If the Raiders committed to Bo Jackson like the Colts commit to Eric Dickerson, and Jackson committed himself to the Raiders like Roger Craig commits himself to the 49ers — Jackson would be a Hall of Famer. But with two other former Heisman Trophy winners in the same huddle, the Raiders have too much talent on offense to commit to any one player. And with baseball still his first priority, Jackson won't commit to the Raiders each season until October. That restricts Bo to about 11 games a year — and that limits the Raiders from ever reaching their full potential as a team.

Jackson is a $1 million a year baseball player for the Kansas City Royals — and he's every bit as dominating on the gridiron as he is on the diamond. Last season he had three consecutive 100-yard rushing games and the NFL's longest run (92 yards). He also averaged a league runnerup 5.5 yards a carry. Jackson has it all — size (6-1, 230), speed (4.29 in the 40), strength, feet and all the gears. He's a bounce runner, and if he turns the corner, he runs as unchallenged as Secretariat did in the Belmont. His speed makes defensive angles disappear. Even if defensive backs reach him, not many are going to drag him down one-on-one because of his power and leverage. Defenses have to gang-tackle Jackson and be physical with him.

Marcus Allen, the 1981 Heisman Trophy winner and the No. 15 NFL rusher of all time, still has the toughness

and the instincts of a great runner, but his health and speed have both failed him lately. Never a burner, Allen has always been able to pick and slide with the best. He has the vision to find the crease and his big runs come on cutbacks. He can still make tacklers miss at the line and in the open field, but he's no longer a threat to go the distance. At age 30, Allen remains a productive blocker and receiver.

Steve Smith gives the Raiders a true fullback. He's a north-south runner who can move a pile. He runs with good body lean, vision and deceptive speed. He's also a productive blocker, an excellent receiver and a good route runner.

Backup halfback Vance Mueller is a better inside runner than out and likes to bulldoze tacklers. Defenses try to force him to bounce outside where he is less threatening. Mueller has good hands and is an adequate receiver, but will fumble. **GRADE** (max. 10): **8.0**

DEFENSIVE LINE Howie Long returned to health in 1989. After a one-year absence, he also returned to the Pro Bowl, his sixth selection in the last seven years. Long is still a dominating player against both the pass and the run. He plays with power and leverage, can pop and shed and is quick to locate the ball. Mega-tough, Long has initial quickness in his pass rush and runs an excellent twist. Even though he is 30 this season, he still commands double-team blocking from offenses.

The Raiders gave Long the company of another Pro Bowl-caliber lineman last season in Bob Golic, who proved to be one of the steals in the NFL's inaugural Plan B class. He is smart and productive, and plays with leverage and technique. He lines up off the ball, as he did in Cleveland, which allows him to read and react. Strong at the point of attack, Golic makes plays in the trench and pursues relentlessly. He isn't much of a factor as a pass rusher. Although the Raiders now play a four-man line, Golic is more productive over center in a three-man front.

The other tackle, Scott Davis, has surprising quickness for his size (6-7, 275) but prefers a power game. He hangs in there at the point of attack but is not a particularly strong run defender. Davis plays high, doesn't always get off the block and has change-of-direction problems. On the pass rush, he has an effective bull rush and counters with a swim move.

Greg Townsend has played both end and outside linebacker for the Raiders, but is more productive in a three-point stance and in a 4-3 scheme. He makes plays on raw ability, speed and quickness. He has good feet and a burst, but he does not use much technique nor does he show much recognition of blocking schemes. At his best when he's on the move, Townsend gets knocked around when he tries to set and read. He also takes on too many blocks with his shoulders, which neutralizes his speed. His favorite pass rush is a dash to the outside, but he'll occasionally slide back underneath with a rip.

Bill Pickel is a former Pro Bowl nose tackle, but has chronic back problems and is starting to show his age (30). He's instinctive, uses his hands and plays with good technique. He makes more plays on effort than ability. Mike Wise can play both tackle and end. He has good size (6-7, 280) and uses his hands well, but plays too high and gets driven. He doesn't make much happen as a pass rusher.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.5**

LINEBACKERS Former Raiders linebacker Ted Hendricks is scheduled for induction into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in August. His election to the Hall was no surprise — but the fact that Davis ever let him retire is. The Raiders seem reluctant to let their quality linebackers go. Outside 'backer Linden King is 35 years old and entering his 13th season. Middle linebacker Jerry Robinson is 33 and entering his 12th season. The youngster of the starting unit is Tom Benson, who is 28 and entering his seventh season.

Robinson, a former All-Pro, remains the focal point in the middle of the Raiders defense. He has the feel, feet and speed to make big plays against the run and pass. Quick to diagnose with acceleration to the ball, Robinson moves fluidly through traffic and in space. But at 6-2, 225, he lacks size for the middle. Guards overpower him at the point of attack.

King is active and uses his hands to control blockers. He relies more on technique and finesse than he does muscle. The oversized tight ends give him a problem. In pass-rush situations, he will butt and grab and has a sneaky burst on the blitz. But he's more effective in coverage because of his awareness of routes in a zone. He's a savvy player who's hanging on until the Raiders can find a capable replacement.

Benson, who replaced a worn-out Rod Martin last year, joined the Raiders as a Plan B free agent. He's bigger (6-2, 240) than Martin, but doesn't get off blocks or string out the sweep as well. And while he's as athletic as vintage Martin, he doesn't have his awareness or big-play knack. Still, Benson can run and hit, and is at his best when he's free to flow to the ball. He was the only Raider linebacker to post a sack last year. He had two.

Emanuel King also signed with the Raiders in Plan B last season. A former No. 1 draft pick, he has size and strength and is hard to knock off the ball. But he's a bit stiff, stays tied up in blocks too long and doesn't make many plays. Like King, Ricky Hunley is a former No. 1 draft pick of the Bengals. He has good mobility for a big man and, like Benson, is at his best when he's free to run to the ball. He also is a solid short-yardage player. But Hunley has trouble getting off blocks.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.0**

DEFENSIVE BACKS The Raiders no longer play the strict bump-and-run defense that was long a trademark. Now they're using more multiple coverage schemes behind the 4-3 base. Despite the absence of a pass rush last season, the Raiders finished fifth in the NFL in pass defense. Their secondary should be bolstered this year by the return of former Pro Bowl free safety Vann McElroy, who missed much of 1989 with a hamstring injury.

With McElroy out, the Raiders turned to Eddie Anderson and he proved a superb replacement with a team-high five interceptions, including two for touchdowns. He runs well, can accelerate to the ball and arrives with a bang. But he has a limited change of direction and will take bad angles. The savvy McElroy is a tougher, more physical player. He's the enforcer of the secondary. He is excellent at keying run and pass, and is aggressive in run support. He also has quickness in coverage and gets a good jump on the airborne football.

Mike Harden, a longtime starter in the Denver secondary, moved into the Raiders lineup at strong safety after signing on as a free agent last September. He's an intelligent, athletic player who makes few mistakes. He has never backed away from a collision. However, at age 32, Harden has slowed considerably.

The Raiders have a couple of speedy cornerbacks in Terry McDaniel and Lionel Washington. McDaniel, a recent No. 1 draft pick, has good feet, hips and great catch-up speed. He relies on that speed to camouflage his mistakes. A confident player who does a nice job of playing the ball, McDaniel is a better press than cushion corner. On a down note, he's not a physical player and gets knocked around forcing the run. He tackles low and appears fragile. Washington, who will throw his body around in run support, also is a better press than cushion corner and employs better techniques than McDaniel. He isn't as agile, however, and gets twisted around by good route-runners. What's worse, Washington has a propensity for giving up the big play.

Even though he is 37 years old, Mike Haynes is no slouch coming off the bench in nickel situations. He still has the fluid athletic ability to go with great technique. Though he has lost a few steps, he knows his limitations and does not make mistakes. Ron Brown, signed this spring as a Plan B free agent, will be given a look at cornerback, a position he played at Arizona State. World-class speed is his principal attribute. Another Plan B'er, Elvis Patterson, may help in press coverages.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.0**

SPECIAL TEAMS The Raiders coverage units were among the best in the NFL in 1989, limiting the opposition to 7.3 yards on punt returns and 17 yards on kickoff returns. They ranked third in the league in both categories, even though they allowed three touchdowns on returns (two kickoffs and one punt).

Journeyman Jeff Gossett is a superb team punter. In his two seasons with the Raiders, he has had 39 punts inside the 20, compared to only 15 touchbacks. He averaged around 41 yards and 34 net yards each season. Jeff Jaeger, another of the Raiders' Plan B signees in 1989, is a reliable kicker inside the 40, converting 17 of 20 field goals last season, 23 of 34 overall. He also gets good distance on his kickoffs.

The Raiders' return game will make a quantum leap with the return of Tim Brown and addition of Ron Brown. Tim was the Pro Bowl return specialist for the AFC as a rookie in 1988 when he averaged 26.8 yards on kickoffs and 9.1 yards on punts. **GRADE** (max. 10): **8.5**

COACHING/ ORGANIZATION Shell is the NFL's first modern-day black head coach. But his hiring had less to do with his race than the fact he's a member in good standing of the Raiders family. With Shell on the sideline, Davis feels he has restored the organizational chemistry that was lacking with Shanahan. Now the onus is on Davis to supply Shell with the players to take the next step from also-ran to contender.

On the relocation front, Davis apparently will return the Raiders to Oakland in 1991. Political and legal maneuvering could muddy the picture, however.

GRADE (max. 10): **7.0**

DRAFT More bullets for the defense — six of the Raiders' first seven choices — was the strategy. Smith and Wallace will load up for the pass rush. Smith has some slick moves and an explosive outside charge but never had much success versus the run. Wallace has the same rush credentials, but as an outside linebacker. He registered 42 career sacks and 48 quarterback pressures. His upper-body strength and pass-coverage skills are highly suspect. The Raiders landed three defensive backs (Dorn, Lewis and Jimerson) and traded a fourth (Smagala) to Dallas for five late-round picks. Dorn is a converted running back, and is both physical and athletic. Lewis is a feisty, in-your-face corner, while Jimerson is a huge safety (6-3, 215) and former linebacker. **GRADE** (max. 10): **5.5**

1990 DRAFT round number (pick in round; overall sequence): 1. (13,11) ANTHONY SMITH, DE, Arizona; 2. (12,37) AARON WALLACE, LB, Texas A&M; 4. (14,95) TORIN DORN, DB, North Carolina; 5. (13,123) STAN SMAGALA, DB, Notre Dame; 6. (12,149) MARCUS WILSON, RB, Virginia; 7. (8,173) GARRY LEWIS, DB, Alcorn State; 8. (4,197) ARTHUR JIMERSON, LB, Norfolk State; 9. (10,230) LEON PERRY, RB, Oklahoma; 11. (27,303) RON LEWIS, WR, Jackson State; 11. (28,304) MYRON JONES, RB, Fresno State; 12. (14,317) MAJOR HARRIS, QB, West Virginia; 12. (28,331) DEMETRIUS DAVIS, TE, Nevada-Reno.

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VETERANS ROSTER

NO.	NAME	POS.	HT.	WT.	BIRTH-DATE	COLLEGE	NFL EXP.
89	Alexander, M.	WR	6-3	195	3/19/65	Penn State	2
32	Allen, M.	RB	6-2	205	3/26/60	Southern Cal	9
33	Anderson, E.	CB	6-1	200	7/22/63	Fort Valley State	5
54	Benson, T.	LB	6-2	240	9/6/61	Oklahoma	7
7	Beuerlein, S.	QB	6-2	210	3/7/65	Notre Dame	3
24	*Brown, R.	CB	5-11	185	3/31/61	Arizona State	7
81	Brown, T.	WR	6-0	195	7/22/66	Notre Dame	2
50	*Burton, R.	LB	6-1	245	5/2/64	North Carolina	4
99	*Campbell, J.	DE	6-3	240	12/28/66	New Mexico State	4
70	Davis, S.	DE	6-7	275	8/7/65	Illinois	3
84	Dyal, M.	TE	6-2	240	5/20/66	Texas A&M	2
	Ellison, R.	LB	6-2	225	8/15/60	Southern Cal	8
86	Fernandez, M.	WR	6-3	200	12/29/59	San Jose State	4
73	*FitzPatrick, J.	T	6-7	300	2/1/64	Southern Cal	5
83	Gault, W.	WR	6-1	180	9/5/60	Tennessee	8
63	Gesek, J.	G	6-5	280	2/18/63	Cal St. Sacramento	4
79	Golic, B.	DT	6-2	275	10/26/57	Notre Dame	11
6	Gossett, J.	P	6-2	195	1/25/57	Eastern Illinois	9
85	Graddy, S.	WR	5-10	175	7/10/64	Tennessee	3
60	Graves, R.	T	6-6	290	7/21/63	Ohio State	3
45	Harden, M.	S	6-1	195	2/16/59	Michigan	11
22	Haynes, M.	CB	6-2	195	7/1/53	Arizona State	15
	Holland, J.	WR	6-2	195	2/1/64	Ohio State	4
88	Horton, E.	TE	6-4	240	12/19/62	North Carolina	4
98	Hunley, R.	LB	6-2	250	1/11/61	Arizona	7
34	Jackson, B.	RB	6-1	230	11/30/62	Auburn	4
18	Jaeger, J.	K	5-11	195	11/26/64	Washington	3
92	King, E.	LB	6-4	250	8/15/63	Alabama	6
52	King, L.	LB	6-4	250	6/28/55	Colorado State	13
97	Klostermann, B.	LB	6-4	250	4/17/63	South Dakota State	4
75	Long, H.	DE	6-5	270	1/6/60	Villanova	10
	McCallum, N.	RB	6-2	215	9/6/63	Navy	4
36	McDaniel, T.	CB	5-10	175	2/8/65	Tennessee	2
26	McElroy, V.	S	6-2	195	1/13/60	Baylor	9
65	*Montoya, M.	G	6-5	280	5/12/56	UCLA	12
72	Mosebar, D.	C	6-6	280	9/11/61	Southern Cal	8
42	Mueller, V.	RB	6-0	215	5/5/64	Occidental	5
43	*Patterson, E.	CB	5-11	195	10/21/60	Kansas	7
71	Pickel, B.	DT	6-5	260	11/5/59	Rutgers	8
31	Porter, K.	RB	6-1	215	9/23/64	Washington State	3
57	Robinson, J.	LB	6-2	225	12/18/56	UCLA	12
13	Schroeder, J.	QB	6-4	215	6/28/61	UCLA	7
35	Smith, S.	RB	6-1	235	8/30/64	Penn State	4
27	*Streeter, G.	S	6-1	205	8/28/67	Notre Dame	2
93	Townsend, G.	DE	6-3	260	11/3/61	Texas Christian	8
48	Washington, L.	CB	6-0	185	10/21/60	Tulane	8
68	Wilkerson, B.	T	6-5	285	7/28/64	Tennessee	4
90	Wise, M.	DE	6-7	270	6/5/64	California-Davis	4
76	Wisniewski, S.	G	6-4	280	4/7/64	Penn State	2
66	Wright, S.	T	6-6	280	4/8/59	Northern Illinois	8

*Plan B free agent

SAN DIEGO CHARGERS

1989 RECORD: 6-10 HEAD COACH: DAN HENNING STADIUM: JACK MURPHY (60,750)

A new general manager, another high first-round draft pick and an emerging young quarterback all signal improvement for the Chargers this season.

But the last-place schedule the Chargers play figures to be more important to San Diego's aspired resurgence this fall. In 1978, the NFL implemented a scheduling format designed to restore competitive balance. First-place teams would play a schedule stocked with other first-place teams, second-place teams would play other second-place teams and so on. Though fluctuating divisional strengths can create exceptions — last year's last-place Atlanta Falcons wound up with 1990's toughest schedule based on opponents' 1989 win-loss records — generally speaking the best teams play the toughest schedules, the worst teams the weakest.

Twenty-four teams have been assigned last-place schedules since 1983, and 17 of them used the easier competition to improve their record — some dramatically. The 1987 Indianapolis Colts rode a last-place schedule to an AFC East championship, and the 1984 New York Giants used a last-place schedule as a springboard to a wild card playoff berth. The '87 Colts, '84 Giants and '89 Green Bay Packers improved their records by six victories apiece with last-place schedules.

Of the Chargers' 10 losses last season, nine were by seven points or less. With a 1990 schedule that features four fellow last-place teams — Dallas (1-15), Tampa Bay (5-11) and the New York Jets (4-12) twice — playoff contention is not out of sight.

WIDE RECEIVERS/ TIGHT END

Anthony Miller may not yet be in a class with John Jefferson and Wes Chandler, who were perennial Pro Bowl picks at San Diego in the Air Coryell years. But Miller did lead the Chargers in receiving in 1989 — something neither Jefferson nor Chandler ever accomplished in their brilliant careers. His 75 receptions for 1,252 yards and an AFC-leading 10 touchdown catches sent the second-year man to his first Pro Bowl.

Miller, who has better speed (4.4 40) than either Jefferson or Chandler, finished second (to Washington's Darrell Green) in the NFL's Fastest Man competition in 1989. He likes deep routes and comebacks, and makes good ball adjustments. Miller has good feet and a dependable shake at the line that helps him escape the press, but he'll make the occasional body catch and seems to hear footsteps in the middle. When the ball is in his hands, he's the ultimate big-play man. He's also the only player in Charger history to return two kickoffs for touchdowns.

Miller isn't all the speed on the San Diego flank. Quinn Early runs in the mid-4.4s and backup Wayne Walker runs in the 4.3s. The common denominator is their quick-strike capability. Early, limited to eight games last season because of a knee injury, recognizes coverages and works the middle well. He is not a smooth route runner, though, and will cradle-catch occasionally. Against the press, he likes to hand slap and push off.

Walker still is learning to read coverages and run routes. Though not a physical player, he will go inside and hold onto the ball. Walker has average hands, but quarterback Billy Joe Tolliver looks for him because of their past connection — they played college ball together at Texas Tech.

With so much flash on the flank, the Chargers want their tight ends and H-backs to be blockers, first and foremost. That's why Arthur Cox goes 277 pounds and Joe Caravello, 270. Both probably could move inside. Cox will make contact and sustain at the point of attack, but he takes bad angles and gets too high at times. In the passing game, he runs control routes and is a load after the catch. Caravello, who missed the final month last year with a knee injury, has good feet and sustains well on linebackers. The Chargers like to use him on wham blocks off motion.

The receiver of the group is Rod Bernstine, a pocket-sized Kellen Winslow at 6-3, 238. He has great speed for a tight end and is elusive after the catch. But he is not a physical player and struggles in blocking situations.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.0**

OFFENSIVE LINE

Not all the redwoods in California are in the northern part of the state. There are a few down south. Five, in fact. You can find them starting on the offensive line of the San Diego Chargers. In tackles Joey Howard and Joel Patten, guards Broderick Thompson and David Richards and center Courtney Hall, the Chargers have one of the biggest lines in the NFL history, averaging 6-4½, 297 pounds. And they are young: Hall and Howard are in their second seasons, Richards in his third, Thompson his fifth and Patten his sixth.

Hall was only 20 years old when San Diego took him in the second round of the 1989 draft. Even though he was the youngest player in the NFL last season, he started all 16 games and was everyone's all-rookie pick at center. He's the smallest Chargers lineman at 6-1, 269, but also the most athletic. Hall has great feet and quickness and can make all the blocks. He is still learning techniques and angles, but has a good step and reach and can lock on a defender. Additional strength would help him in a power game.

Richards (6-4, 310) also has started every game of his two-year career — 16 at right tackle in 1988 and 16 at right guard in 1989. Right tackle is his natural spot. Strong and quick, Richards is a powerful drive blocker. In pass protection, he takes a short set and tries to muscle the defender. Though he's smart and adjusts quickly, Richards lacks the close-quarter agility to consistently succeed in space and the mobility to pull effectively.

Thompson (6-4, 295), a defensive lineman in college, brings good strength and aggressiveness to left guard. Unlike Richards, Thompson plays better when he's uncovered. He's an adequate drive blocker, though he spends too much time off his feet. As a pass blocker, he likes a short set so he can bring his strong arms and hands into play. His feet are no better than average.

Patten, a 1989 Plan B find off the Indianapolis roster, is smart and quick. He gives good effort, sustains and makes few mistakes. But his strength doesn't always match his size (6-7, 307). He's a catcher in run blocking and occasionally gets knocked back in pass protection by a good bull rush. Otherwise, he's a solid pass protector who's tough to beat because of the real estate his size allows him to cover.

Howard (6-5, 305) has the size, hands and hustle you like in a left tackle. However, he plays soft and needs more strength. He has trouble with a speed rush, yet knows how to wall off a defender. His inexperience encourages him to hold when the battles aren't going in his favor.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.0**

QUARTERBACK

The Chargers made two major investments at the quarterback position last year, acquiring Jim McMahon for the present and drafting Billy Joe Tolliver for the future. But the present lasted only 12 games. McMahon's supporting cast didn't resemble the one he left behind in Chicago and neither did his record. With the Chargers floundering at 4-8 under McMahon, coach Dan Henning turned the offense over to Tolliver last December. In his final two starts of the season, Tolliver engineered victories over Denver and Kansas City, the first- and second-place finishers in the AFC West. McMahon has since been released.

Tolliver shows poise and confidence. He has a quick set, a good release and can drive the ball. As with many gun-armed young quarterbacks, Tolliver prefers to go downfield and will force passes. In addition, he doesn't look defenders off and stays locked into one receiver too long, especially Miller and Walker. The heavy-legged Tolliver is not a runner, but can avoid the rush. In short, he has the tools to be a good one. He just needs the experience.

David Archer, who played for Henning in Atlanta, is the principal backup. He's tough, competitive and knows the offense. He hasn't shown the front-line skills or consistency to be anything more than stopgap, though.

GRADE (max. 10): **4.5**

RUNNING BACKS

With Pro Bowl halfback Gary Anderson holding out the entire 1989 season in a contract dispute and scatback Darrin Nelson not arriving until midseason in a trade with the Dallas Cowboys, rookie Marion Butts plowed his 250 pounds into San Diego's backfield picture. The Chargers considered the 29-year-old Anderson's contract demands to be excessive, and he was shipped to Tampa Bay for two draft choices prior to the 1990 draft.

Butts, an unheralded seventh-round draft choice from Florida State, where he didn't even start, rushed for a team-leading 683 yards and nine touchdowns. As green as he is powerful, Butts lacks vision and makes some poor run decisions. On the other hand, he has good in-line quickness, runs very hard (albeit high) and has excellent balance. Because of his inexperience, Butts will put the ball on the ground.

Nelson is a nifty, shifty mini-back with good vision and a burst to the crease. Especially valuable as a receiver, he has soft hands and runs sound pass routes. At 31, Nelson is a deluxe third-down option in the Chargers' offensive package. His gamebreaker days are history, however.

Tim Spencer, who never achieved the heights in the NFL that he did in the USFL, is a power back who can move a pile. Though he has better-than-average speed, Spencer is a straight-line runner who isn't effective outside the tackles. The Chargers also added Joe Mickles (Washington), Thomas Sanders (Chicago) and Ronnie Harmon (Buffalo) via Plan B.

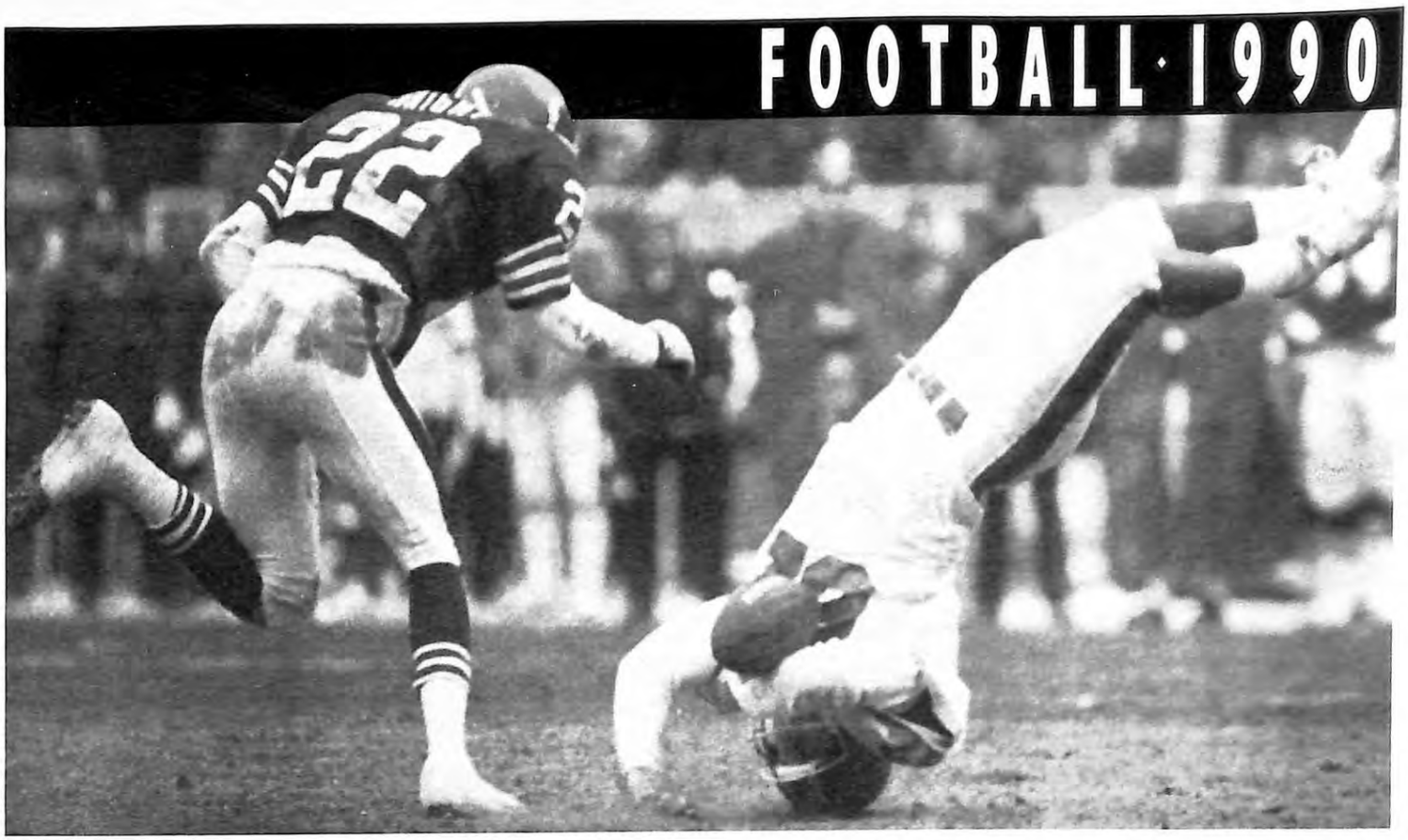
GRADE (max. 10): **5.0**

DEFENSIVE LINE

Lee Williams and Burt Grossman combined for 24 sacks last season, which made them the top end tandem in the AFC and the focal point of a San Diego pass rush that led the conference with 48 sacks. Williams is the ringleader up front. He led the AFC with 14 sacks in 1989 and has finished as the conference runnerup twice in the past five years. His 56½ sacks in that span is second in the AFC behind the 57½ of Buffalo's Bruce Smith. A nightmare for pass protectors, Williams is quick and fluid with all the right moves. He doesn't dominate against the run as he does the pass, but he's solid. Strong and active, he gets off blocks efficiently and is especially productive sliding down the line and running plays down from the backside.

Grossman had 10 sacks last season in earning all-rookie acclaim. He has good athletic ability and sound instincts. He doesn't have all the techniques down yet, but he uses his hands effectively. He will butt, grab and rip. He prefers the outside rush but will show an occasional — and effective — twist. Against the run, Grossman gets knocked around at the point of attack. He plays high at 6-6 and pays for it.

Nose tackles Joe Phillips and Les Miller are strictly run defenders. Phillips, the smaller of the two (6-5, 275), lacks agility and quickness and gets lost in traffic. But he is a force at the point of attack with good instincts and strong hands for shedding. He likes to power rush with a butt, but is vulnerable to the trap block. Miller is surprisingly smooth and quick for a man his size (6-7, 293) and has a knack for staying in his gap. He does not use his hands particularly well and has trouble separating from blocks. His lateral movement is just average, and he leaves himself open to cut and down blocks. He's a pure power pass rusher.



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8COB6

Anthony Miller

Backup end George Hinkle is better against the pass than the run. He's quick off the ball but needs better strength. **GRADE** (max. 10): **7.5**

LINEBACKERS The NFL learned in 1989 never to underestimate Leslie O'Neal. He was the AFC Defensive Rookie of the Year in 1986, even though he missed the final three games of the season with a potentially career-ending knee injury. O'Neal spent all of 1987 and most of 1988 rehabilitating his knee. He returned for the second half of the 1988 season playing strictly as a pass-rush specialist and posted four sacks. Last year, the Chargers pulled him out of the traffic flow at the line of scrimmage, moving him from end to outside linebacker, and he responded with his first Pro Bowl season.

Down or up, O'Neal remains a highly skilled pass rusher. He doesn't stay blocked. He runs well, knows all the moves and when to use them. He gets a great jump at the snap and sets up stunts well. When he takes an outside path he likes speed and a rip. When he comes inside he likes a twist and rip. The knee injury cost him some of his great quickness, but he plays with smarts and technique in a scheme designed to maximize his impact. Against the run he will play soft and high at times, but is adept at slipping blocks. He seems to wear down as the game wears on.

Billy Ray Smith has been playing at a Pro Bowl level for the past five years, but no one seems to notice. He has never been voted the trip to Hawaii. Smart, strong and ultra-intense, Smith is custom-made for the tight end side. He plays with leverage, uses his hands well and doesn't stay blocked. He hangs in tough at the point and provides a power blitz. Though he runs well, Smith is better in forward gear than reverse. He has a good feel for pass defense, but his feet are ordinary.

The caliber of linebackers slips from excellent outside to solid inside. Gary Plummer and Cedric Figaro are good run defenders limited by their lack of speed and agility. Plummer is an instinctive, all-out player who attacks the line of scrimmage with gusto. He stays on his feet, finds the ball and makes few mistakes. Over the past four years, he has led the team in tackles. Figaro has impressive size (6-2, 250) and strength and takes on blockers well. A power hitter, he makes a lot of plays between the tackles. Figaro isn't the diagnostician Plummer is, but experience will help. He is limited in space, yet makes more plays than he should.

Inside linebacker Jim Collins is smart and will strike a blow. But he's reaching the end of the line at 32. Backup outside linebacker David Brandon needs seasoning. He has good hands and feet but plays soft and struggles in space. **GRADE** (max. 10): **7.0**

DEFENSIVE BACKS Even though they have a secondary stocked with players other teams didn't want, the Chargers finished fourth in the NFL in pass defense last season. San Diego traded for safeties Vencie Glenn in 1986 and Martin Bayless in 1987 and signed cornerback Sam Seale as a free agent in 1988 after he was cut by the Raiders. San Diego's only homegrown product is former No. 1 draft pick Gill Byrd, who led all NFL cornerbacks in interceptions last season with seven.

Byrd has everything you want in a corner except top speed. He has good feet, the fluid actions of a shortstop and a burst to the ball. Equally comfortable on the press or playing the cushion, Byrd has a feel for pass routes and reacts to them. He is the team's best cover man and a plus in run support.

Seale has the jets that Byrd lacks, but is miles behind in terms of technique. Though he has good acceleration and change of direction, he lacks route recognition, tends to guess and is prone to the big mistake. He lets getting burned bother him, too.

Glenn has become a better-than-average free safety. He runs well, gets a nice jump on the ball, takes good angles and covers a lot of ground. Though he's fearless, Glenn doesn't always wrap up on tackles. He's also a sucker for play-action and gets caught shallow.

Strong safety Bayless is an active, hard-nosed run defender. He likes to mix it up and is usually in the vicinity of the ball. While he can read routes and function in a zone, Bayless lacks the lateral quickness and change of direction for man coverage.

Holdover cornerback Roy Bennett also signed with the Chargers as a free agent. Bennett, better in zones, isn't a physical player. He lacks catch-up speed and has a tough time with double moves. Arriving this year is Bruce Plummer, a Plan B free agent from the Colts. He has decent feet but lacks plant and drive. He's strictly a zone cornerback. The best reserve is safety Lester Lyles, who has good awareness in short zones and is an effective blitzer.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.5**

SPECIAL TEAMS In Anthony Miller, the Chargers have one of the premier kickoff returners in the league. He has a career 25.7-yard average. The Chargers aren't as blessed on their punt return team. They tried the departed Dana Brinson and Phil McConkey last season and probably will give Wayne Walker a shot in 1990.

The Chargers didn't protect either kicker (Chris Bahr) or punter (Hank Ilesic) in Plan B and lost Ilesic to the Rams. Bahr was released, leaving John Carney (Plan B, Tampa Bay) and free agent Fuad Reveiz to battle for the job. Veteran punter John Kidd, who set an NFL record of 33 kicks inside the 20 in 1986, came from Buffalo in Plan B. His average last year was 39.9 (32.3 net), just under his six-year NFL average of 40.5. The Chargers didn't lend much coverage support to either kicker last season, ranking near the bottom in both punts and kickoffs.

GRADE (max. 10): **4.0**

COACHING/ ORGANIZATION The January arrival of Bobby Beathard as general manager further stoked the optimism the Chargers had built with season-ending victories over Kansas City and Denver. With Beathard serving as director of player personnel at Miami, the Dolphins won two Super Bowls in the '70s. With Beathard serving as general manager at Washington, the Redskins won two Super Bowls in the '80s. He had only three first-round draft picks for the Redskins in the '80s and all three, Art Monk, Mark May and Darrell Green, went to the Pro Bowl. He excels at finding players in the later rounds, such as Monte Coleman (11th, 1979), Dexter Manley (5th, 1981), Mark Rypien (6th, 1986) and Timmy Smith (5th, 1987).

Dan Henning, whom Beathard inherited as his head coach in San Diego, has had previous experience with his new boss. Henning was on the Washington coaching staff that won those two Super Bowls. So the two are familiar with each other's style. However, they are working for a very impatient owner in Alex Spanos. Henning is Spanos' third coach and Beathard his third general manager in the last four years. **GRADE** (max. 10): **6.0**

DRAFT While the Chargers need offensive thunderbolts, they went for outside linebackers with their first two picks, adding to an already all-star cast of Billy Ray Smith and Leslie O'Neal. Seau, boasting a super charge and strength, is a potential Pro Bowler. As a junior, his only starting season, he had 19 sacks and 34 pressures. Mills, from the Big Eight, is familiar with stopping the run but can get lost on pass coverage. He figures as a backup to Smith. Goeas can move and pass block, and should provide relief to an offensive line which needs more athletic bodies. One of the more interesting of the Chargers' windfall 17 picks was quarterback Friesz. His stock dipped before the draft, but he was the Big Sky's offensive player of the year for three straight seasons (1987-89) and last year had stats of 4,041 yards and 31 touchdowns. He has a good arm, but no mobility. **GRADE** (max. 10): **6.0**

1990 DRAFT round number (pick in round; overall sequence): 1. (7,5) JUNIOR SEAU, LB, Southern California; 3. (4,57) JEFF MILLS, LB, Nebraska; 3. (7,60) LEO GOEAS, OG, Hawaii; 3. (14,67) WALTER WILSON, WR, East Carolina; 6. (1,138) JOHN FRIESZ, QB, Idaho; 6. (6,143) FRANK CORNISH, C, UCLA; 6. (8,145) DAVID POOL, DB, Carson-Newman; 6. (26,163) DERRICK WALKER, TE, Michigan; 7. (7,172) JEFF NOVAK, OG, SW Texas State; 7. (20,185) JOE STAYSNIAK, OT, Ohio State; 7. (22,187) NATE LEWIS, WR, Oregon Tech; 7. (28,193) KEITH COLLINS, DB, Appalachian State; 8. (8,201) J.J. FLANNIGAN, RB, Colorado; 9. (7,227) CHRIS GOETZ, OG, Pittsburgh; 10. (8,256) KENNY BERRY, DB, Miami; 11. (7,283) TOMMIE STOWERS, TE, Missouri; 12. (23,326) ELLIOTT SEARCY, WR, Southern University.

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VETERANS ROSTER

NO.	NAME	POS.	HT.	WT.	BIRTH-DATE	COLLEGE	NFL EXP.
15	Archer, D.	QB	6-2	208	2/15/62	Iowa State	7
44	Bayless, M.	SS	6-2	212	10/11/62	Bowling Green	7
23	Bennett, R.	CB	6-2	195	7/5/61	Jackson State	3
82	Bernstine, R.	HB	6-3	238	2/8/65	Texas A&M	4
58	Brandon, D.	LB	6-4	230	2/9/65	Memphis State	4
35	Butts, M.	RB	6-1	248	8/1/66	Florida State	2
22	Byrd, G.	CB	5-11	198	2/20/61	San Jose State	8
46	Caravello, J.	HB	6-3	270	6/6/63	Tulane	4
	*Carney, J.	K	5-11	170	4/20/64	Notre Dame	2
55	Collins, J.	LB	6-2	233	6/11/58	Syracuse	10
88	Cox, A.	TE	6-2	277	2/5/61	Texas Southern	8
87	Early, Q.	WR	6-0	190	4/13/65	Iowa	3
51	Figaro, C.	LB	6-2	250	8/17/66	Notre Dame	3
25	Glenn, V.	FS	6-0	192	10/26/64	Indiana State	5
92	Grossman, B.	DE	6-6	270	4/10/67	Pittsburgh	2
53	Hall, C.	C	6-2	269	8/26/68	Rice	2
	*Harmon, R.	RB	5-11	200	5/7/64	Iowa	5
97	Hinkle, G.	DE	6-5	269	3/17/65	Arizona	3
79	Howard, J.	T	6-6	305	9/14/65	Tennessee	2
	*Kidd, J.	P	6-3	208	8/22/61	Northwestern	7
24	Lyles, L.	SS	6-3	200	12/27/62	Virginia	6
31	McEwen, C.	HB	6-1	220	12/16/65	Utah	4
60	McKnight, D.	C-G	6-4	280	9/12/59	Drake	8
	*Mickles, J.	RB	5-10	221	12/25/65	Mississippi	2
83	Miller, A.	WR	5-11	185	4/15/65	Tennessee	3
69	Miller, L.	NT	6-7	293	3/1/65	Fort Hays State	4
20	Nelson, D.	RB	5-9	185	1/2/59	Stanford	9
91	O'Neal, L.	DE	6-4	259	5/7/64	Oklahoma State	4
85	Parker, A.	TE	6-5	245	9/8/61	Utah	7
78	Patten, J.	T	6-7	307	2/7/58	Duke	6
75	Phillips, J.	NT	6-5	275	7/15/63	SMU	5
	*Plummer, B.	S	6-1	203	9/1/64	Mississippi State	4
50	Plummer, G.	LB	6-2	240	1/26/60	California	5
	Reveiz, F.	K	5-11	216	2/24/63	Tennessee	4
65	Richards, D.	G-T	6-5	310	4/11/66	UCLA	3
98	Robinson, G.	DE	6-3	262	5/4/63	Auburn	3
	*Rodenhauser, M.	C	6-5	263	6/1/61	Illinois State	3
	*Sanders, T.	RB	5-11	203	1/4/62	Texas A&M	6
30	Seale, S.	CB	5-9	185	10/6/62	Western State (Colo.)	7
	*Simmonds, M.	G	6-4	285	8/12/64	Indiana State	2
54	Smith, B.	OLB	6-3	236	8/10/61	Arkansas	8
43	Spencer, T.	RB	6-2	223	12/10/60	Ohio State	6
76	Thompson, B.	G-T	6-5	295	8/14/60	Kansas	5
11	Tolliver, B.J.	QB	6-1	218	2/7/66	Texas Tech	2
	*Toth, T.	G	6-5	282	5/23/62	Western Michigan	5
13	Vlasic, M.	QB	6-3	206	10/25/63	Iowa	3
80	Walker, W.	WR	5-8	162	12/27/66	Texas Tech	2
67	Williams, La.	G	6-5	290	7/3/63	Notre Dame	4
99	Williams, Le.	DE	6-5	271	10/15/62	Bethune-Cookman	7

*Plan B free agent

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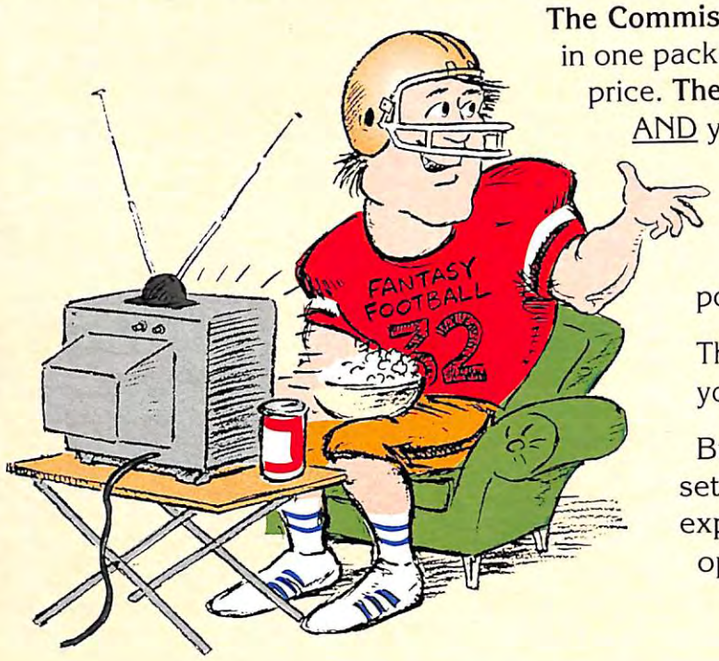

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SEATTLE SEAHAWKS

1989 RECORD: 7-9 HEAD COACH: CHUCK KNOX STADIUM: KINGDOME (64,984)

The players who helped carry the Seahawks to four playoff berths and an AFC West championship in the past seven years are going, going — or gone. Suddenly age, not perennial nemesis Denver, is the Seahawks' foe.

Steve Largent, the NFL's all-time leading receiver, retired at age 35. Curt Warner, three-time Pro Bowl pick, was ignobly exposed to Plan B before signing with the Rams. Tackle Mike Wilson, who started every game for the Seahawks since arriving in 1986, retired. End Jacob Green, the club's all-time sack leader, is 33. Quarterback Dave Krieg, the NFL's all-time No. 5 passer, is 32. Six other starters will be in their 30s this year. And don't forget older-than-he-looks Brian Bosworth (25), whose brief, underachieving career has apparently succumbed to arthritis in the shoulders.

Unproductive recent drafts compound this team's downward spiral. Laden with has-beens and youthful disappointments, Seattle plunged from division champ in 1988 to fourth-place chump in 1989. Even if the Seahawks avert a total tailspin, don't expect a smooth landing.

WIDE RECEIVERS/ TIGHT END

For the first 14 seasons in franchise history, Steve Largent was Seattle's offensive crutch. He caught 23 percent of 3,600-plus passes completed since the team's inception in 1976. The Seahawks' new "go to" guy is Brian Blades. In just his second season in 1989, he caught an AFC runnerup 77 passes and was named to the Pro Bowl. Blades runs good routes and isn't afraid to make the tough catch over the middle. A smooth runner, he has the requisite separation gear on the deep routes but doesn't always adjust well to the ball, especially downfield where he had some critical drops last season. Against the press, Blades likes to shake at the line of scrimmage, slap hands and then push off. He gives great effort as a blocker.

Tommy Kane has the blazing speed to complement Blades and stretch defenses. But what he doesn't have is good health. Kane missed seven games in 1988 (groin) and 11 games in 1989 (knee). The Seahawks still like his talent, but not his durability. Another burner, Louis Clark, catches and runs well and has possibilities.

Seattle has two capable possession types — one big (6-3 Jeff Chadwick) and one small (5-11 Paul Skansi). Chadwick is a long strider who uses a lot of moves and fakes, but he has only average acceleration out of his breaks. He has trouble getting off the line against the press, but has fine hands and can read coverages. Skansi is more quick than fast. With 39 catches, he'll lay out in a crowd. The Seahawks like to put this third-down specialist in motion and run pick routes for him.

The Seahawks have two big, young tight ends in Robert Tyler and Travis McNeal. Both are in their second season. Tyler has great size (6-5, 257) but is a finesse blocker. He makes the initial contact but gets high and does not sustain. As a receiver, he has good hands and initial quickness but lacks footwork. He can work a zone and linebacker coverage yet doesn't make good ball adjustments.

McNeal (6-3, 248) has the footwork and some fire off the ball. He's aggressive and stays after his man, but has trouble with stunts. He needs to improve his techniques, blocking angles and overall consistency. As a receiver, he has an average release at the line and little coverage recognition. He does a nice job fighting through the linebacker jam and is a load after the catch. Lending experience is Ron Heller, a Plan B pickup who started for the 49ers and Falcons the last two years. Strictly a receiver, Heller caught 33 passes last year and could wind up starting for this team, too.

GRADE (max. 10): **4.5**

OFFENSIVE LINE

This unit hadn't been good for some time, and certainly 1989 was no different. Predictable schemes, camp holdouts (Millard, Mattes and Bailey) and a tentative feature runner contributed to the line's ineffectiveness. For the record, Seattle finished 25th in the NFL in rushing and gave up 46 sacks (third-worst).

On the up side, 1989 rookie Andy Heck has the look of a future Pro Bowler. Left tackles must master pass blocking first and Heck has the size (6-6, 291), strength, feet and quickness to handle the top pass rushers on the open side. Although he suffered some embarrassing moments in pass protection early on, he showed significant improvement later on, like shutting down the Bills' Bruce Smith convincingly in Week 13. Heck is a sound drive blocker and can get downfield. He just needs experience.

With veteran Mike Wilson's retirement, former left tackle Ron Mattes will resurface on the right side. Mattes knows his limitations and plays within them. He's strong at the point of attack but lacks quickness and doesn't fare well in space. He uses his hands well in pass protection and is difficult to beat with an outside rush. But he struggles with a rip or swim inside.

Right guard Bryan Millard is Seattle's best offensive lineman. He is tough, nasty and hits anything that moves. An excellent drive blocker who looks to bury his man, Millard also gets out on pulls, takes the proper angles and levels his target. He is a solid pass protector with a short set, active hands and feet. But he ducks his head occasionally and balance is not his strong suit. Millard should have gone to the Pro Bowl in both '87 and '88 but did not play at that level in '89.

Edwin Bailey, the left guard, is on the decline. A better run blocker than pass protector, Bailey has good initial quickness and long, strong arms. However, he overextends at times and will lunge. He gets off balance in pass protection, too, and is susceptible to a hard outside rush with a weave back inside.

Center Grant Feasel, who replaced Plan B defector Blair Bush, makes few mistakes and uses his long arms skillfully in pass protection. Stumpy, quick nose tackles create leverage problems for him on run blocking assignments, though, and he's not effective on the move. After being waived by Baltimore ('84) and Minnesota ('86), Feasel is making the most of his journeyman skills.

Warren Wheat, plucked from the waiver wire, has quick feet and natural athletic ability, and is comfortable at either guard or center.

GRADE (max. 10): **4.5**

QUARTERBACK

Dave Krieg may rank statistically with the greatest passers in NFL history, but management certainly doesn't consider him among the elite. Last season, Krieg threw 20 interceptions and was responsible for an NFL-record 18 fumbles. Yet when the AFC couldn't find any quarterbacks to accept an invitation to the Pro Bowl, Krieg went and almost copped game MVP honors.

Krieg always has been tough to sort out. He runs hot and cold as a passer, tends to lock on one receiver too long, and after 10 years still doesn't know when to throw the ball away. Because of his size (6-1), Krieg gets more passes batted down at the line than most quarterbacks and his small hands are a detriment on cold or rainy days. Despite his physical flaws, "Mudbone" is a tough, ultra-competitive leader. He invariably bounces back. To take advantage of his good maneuverability (and diversify their attack), the Seahawks will throw in some variations of the run-and-shoot next season.

Kelly Stouffer, who started some games during the middle of last season, is supposed to be the "quarterback of the future." He has better size and a stronger arm than Krieg but lacks decisiveness and mobility. The jury is out on him.

GRADE (max. 10): **7.0**

RUNNING BACKS

Running the football is integral to Chuck Knox's offensive philosophy, as is the I-formation sprint draw series. Last year Knox died a thousand deaths as his beloved running game was consistently shut down. Don't expect a resurrection this year.

Until last season, Curt Warner ran the sprint draw about as well as it could be run. Yet the traits (vision, quickness, agility, etc.) that made him special had largely eroded, making his departure this offseason far from devastating. Yet with youthful Kevin Harmon also departed via Plan B, Seattle's tailback cupboards are bare. Elroy Harris carried the ball only eight times. He has speed, strength and vision but puts the ball on the carpet. Derrick Fenner, who reminds some in Seattle of former Seahawk Sherman Smith, is a big, athletic back with a slashing style and natural instincts. He's a classic albeit raw I-style tailback.

Fullback John L. Williams remains the club's marquee performer. Embroiled in a preseason contract dispute last year, Williams started slowly and stayed that way. When right, Williams is the most complete fullback in the NFL. He has had career 100-yard games as both a runner and receiver. He rushed for a career-high 877 yards in 1988 and led all NFL running backs with 76 receptions in 1989. He is a physical receiver who uses his size (5-11, 228) to muscle into the clear. He comes out of his breaks with zip, can turn the corner on sweeps and surprise pursuing secondaries with his speed. Seattle likes working him downfield. As a runner, he can make tacklers miss or run over them. He also squares up and is an excellent blocker.

Veteran fullback James Jones missed most of the season with a broken wrist. Jones is a solid receiver and once caught 77 passes in a season for Detroit (1984). He's a strong runner who can move a pile but won't break any long ones.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.0**

DEFENSIVE LINE

The unit of Jeff Bryant, Jacob Green and Joe Nash has lasted longer than most marriages (6½ seasons), but their productivity is sinking fast. The trio managed only 14½ sacks last season and opponents pushed them around for an average of 132 rushing yards a game — sixth-worst in the league. Without a strong defensive lineman at the point, the Seahawks bagged their predominant 3-4 alignment over the offseason in favor of four down linemen for 1990.

The switch should help Bryant and Green, neither of whom are big or strong enough to play end in a 3-4 where they're lined up directly over 300-pound offensive tackles. Good drive-blocking tackles simply blow them away. Of the two, Bryant has the most present value. He has decent feet and hands and pursues well. In pass-rush situations, he's quick off the ball and has a good arm rip. He's primarily an outside rusher with an occasional spin, but often plays too high and lets blockers get into his body. Still, he's the stronger of the two at the point, and for that reason, is likely to see considerable action at defensive tackle.

Green has seen better days. In his prime, he was a big-play operator with explosive upfield quickness and pursuit speed. Last year he was far from special. In fact, some scouts wondered why Seattle protected him in Plan B. The club hopes lining up Green on the tackle's outside shoulder will give him that half-step he needs to once again become a factor.

Tony Woods was solid enough at linebacker, but was not the impact player Seattle thought it drafted in 1987's first round (18th chosen overall). That's why he'll get a shot at end in 1990. Now don't bet the farm that Woods will suddenly turn into a Chris Doleman or Freddie Joe Nunn, but what else could the Seahawks do? At 6-4, Woods has good speed and strength and has bulked up in the offseason from 244 to 260. He can stuff lead blockers and has quick hands and feet. However, he lacks awareness, takes plays off and doesn't make much happen. In the pass rush, he likes to grab cloth and bull his way back. But if he doesn't get a good jump at the snap, he tends to let up.

Nash, a former Pro Bowl nose tackle who will line up at left defensive tackle, was clearly the best of the three in 1989. He had 92 tackles, a team runnerup eight sacks and three blocked field goals. He's also turning 30, and would be more effective splitting duty inside, perhaps with Bryant. Nash has a good pad level, uses his hands and plays tackle-to-tackle with leverage and quickness. He can neutralize drive blocks and find the ball. His low center of gravity also makes him difficult to cut. On the other hand, he struggles with bigger linemen and double-teams. As a pass rusher, Nash is more active than athletic. He'll use a butt or a shoulder slap and gets quick penetration when he guesses pass. He'll counter with a swim move.

The Seahawks protected all three of their backup linemen in Plan B — Roy Hart, Jethro Franklin and Elston Ridgle. Hart (6-1, 280) is a power player with surprising quickness and good technique who should help inside versus the run. At end, Franklin is small (6-1, 258) with some speed and quickness for the pass rush, while Ridgle has the bulk (6-5, 270) to play the run.

GRADE (max. 10): **4.5**

LINEBACKERS

The Seahawks had two first-round cracks at landing an impact linebacker in 1987, taking Woods in the regular draft and Brian Bosworth in the supplemental. The real help, however, has come from a 207-pound free agent, and a player the team tried to trade.

Rufus Porter, who signed as a free agent out of Southern in 1988, posed the team's only real pass-rushing threat. That's a sad commentary on the defensive line but doesn't detract from the performance of Porter, a Pro Bowl special teamer who developed into an impact player as a 4-3 end in pass-rush situations. Although still undersized at 6-1, 221, he has 4.6 speed, stays on his feet and owns a big-time heart. Porter explodes off the ball, closes quickly on the quarterback and will get plenty of opportunities as the club's starting weak outside 'backer. On the down side, he gets handled on the run at him and his pass rush slips into neutral when the blocker gets his hands on him. Coverage could be an adventure.

Seattle tried hard to unwittingly trade its best linebacker, Dave Wyman, to San Francisco in 1987, only to have him return when an old shoulder injury showed up on the 49ers physical to nix the deal. *Whew.* Wyman stepped into the Seahawks starting inside linebacker spot in 1988, and has since become the team runnerup in tackles. Smart and active, he reacts quickly and takes good angles of pursuit. He drops with awareness in pass coverage. In the 4-3 defense, Wyman will be the middle man. Better in pursuit, he needs to fill more aggressively and tackle better than he did last season.

Darren Comeaux, who played very impressively in 1988 when he took over for an injured Bosworth, wasn't as effective in 1989. He's better inside, but without help from the draft, he'll be forced to line up over the tight end. He makes plays in the line but too often chooses a side on blocks and gets driven out of the hole. Not very good in space, Comeaux is stiff, has below-average feet and lacks a burst to the ball. He makes some plays in pass coverage because of route recognition.

Chronic shoulder problems jeopardize Bosworth's career. He missed six games in 1988 and 14 last year. Speed is his prime asset, and some scouts think the weak outside is (was?) his natural position. **GRADE** (max. 10): **4.5**

DEFENSIVE BACKS

Second-year player Dwayne Harper isn't the biggest, fastest nor niftiest cornerback in the league — or even on his own team. He has a chance to develop into a pretty good player, though. Tenacious and tough to intimidate, Harper plays better in a press mode and reacts quickly to the ball. He also will throw his smallish frame around in run support.

Patrick Hunter has better speed, feet, hips and change of direction than Harper, but didn't play like it last year. Injuries and off-the-field problems have blunted his development. The Seahawks' best press corner and man-to-man defender, Hunter plays with good techniques but settles on inside moves and short routes, and spends a lot of time chasing receivers. He'll mix it up with wideouts; he is not as enthusiastic in run support, however.

James Jefferson is a former All-CFL corner who made his NFL debut last season. He's the fastest of all the Seattle defensive backs but is still feeling his way around and making mistakes. Big (6-1, 199) and physical, Jefferson has good quickness yet only average change of direction. Melvin Jenkins, another CFL refugee, doesn't embarrass himself on the corner or in the situational packages. He's pretty pedestrian in coverage, and only a marginal tackler.

John L. Williams

Eugene Robinson has good physical ability and better man coverage than most NFL free safeties. But he's slow reading offenses and his penchant for making costly mistakes in coverage — including biting on play-action — too often leaves corners exposed on the deep sideline routes. He did play deeper and more cautiously in 1989. Although he led the team in tackles last season and will strike a blow, Robinson misses too many tackles and overruns plays. His skills would prosper with a better supporting cast.

Strong safety Nesby Glasgow, 33, plays with savvy, awareness and toughness but is too limited as a pass defender. His days as a productive starter are numbered. But he's heard that before. **GRADE** (max. 10): **5.0**

SPECIAL TEAMS

Norm Johnson holds the franchise scoring record and has led the team in scoring for eight consecutive seasons. Yet he wasn't as reliable last season, missing 10 of his 25 field goal attempts — an unusually high number considering half his games were indoors and two others were in ideal weather conditions. He wasn't the only Seattle kicker to have problems in 1989. Punter Ruben Rodriguez had substandard averages of 39.9 and 32.9 (net), and suffered the first blocked punt of his career to go with a minus-2-yard effort against Denver. . .in Seattle. . . indoors. The Seahawks didn't protect him in Plan B.

Porter spearheaded Seattle's outstanding coverage units, which ranked in the top 10 in both punts (8.1 yards) and kickoffs (18.5 yards). Jefferson was a plus on kickoff returns (23.2) while re-signed Plan B castoff Bobby Joe Edmonds should add additional spark. A productive return specialist despite lacking a breakaway dimension, Edmonds' elusive/quick style is most effective on punts.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.5**

COACHING/ ORGANIZATION

Rookie general manager Tom Flores, hired in February 1989, watched his team lose three starters and get generally hammered in Plan B. Although five of the 11 draft picks did make the club, only two (Heck and McNeal) saw appreciable playing time. In addition, neither Flores nor new owner Ken Behring could find a prudent resolve to lengthy camp holdouts that crippled the progress of last year's offensive line.

Chuck Knox has ruled the Seahawks roost, both on the field and in the draft room. In eight drafts (six regular, two supplemental) from his arrival in 1983 through 1988, only 14 players (seven starters) are still on the Seahawks roster. He believes in playing veterans, but now that the Seahawks are struggling, his reluctance to play younger players has slowed the rebuilding process. Knox has significant holes on his roster, and he must turn to inexperienced players to fill them. **GRADE** (max. 10): **6.0**

DRAFT

Like everyone else in the AFC West, the Seahawks did it defensively, no surprise because this unit was at the "Mayday" stage. Kennedy was the premier stop guy available and needs only to keep his waistline stable. He stuffs, rushes and collapses the pocket. Pencil him in as a starter. The trading price to get Kennedy (two first-round picks) was high, but he should be worth it. Linebacker Wooden, a high second-rounder with 4.6 speed, can blitz and pursues well. He also figures as a starter. Another second-round pick, Blackmon, could move in at strong safety. He had 14 career interceptions at Baylor and a highlight reel of deluxe hits. Runner Warren is raw, but big and fast. Huge defensive tackle Hayes and productive linebacker Bolcar should make the final roster.

GRADE (max. 10): **7.0**

1990 DRAFT round number (pick in round; overall sequence): 1. (5,3) CORTEZ KENNEDY, DT, Miami; 2. (4,29) TERRY WOODEN, LB, Syracuse; 2. (9,34) ROBERT BLACKMON, DB, Baylor; 4. (9,89) CHRIS WARREN, RB, Ferrum (Va.); 5. (10,119) ERIC HAYES, DT, Florida State; 6. (9,146) NED BOLCAR, LB, Notre Dame; 7. (10,175) BOB KULA, OT, Michigan State; 8. (9,202) BILL HITCHCOCK, OT, Purdue; 10. (9,257) ROBERT MORRIS, DE, Valdosta State; 11. (10,286) DARYL REED, DB, Oregon; 12. (9,312) JOHN GROMOS, QB, Vanderbilt.

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VETERANS ROSTER

NO.	NAME	POS.	HT.	WT.	BIRTH-DATE	COLLEGE	NFL EXP.
50	*Ahrens, D.	LB	6-4	245	12/5/58	Wisconsin	10
95	Alvord, S.	DT	6-4	272	10/2/64	Washington	3
65	Bailey, E.	G	6-4	273	5/15/59	South Carolina St	10
89	Blades, B.	WR	5-11	184	7/24/65	Miami (Fla.)	3
55	Bosworth, B.	LB	6-2	236	3/9/65	Oklahoma	3
64	Brilz, D.	G	6-3	270	2/14/64	Oregon State	4
77	Bryant, J.	DE	6-5	277	5/22/60	Clemson	9
88	Chadwick, J.	WR	6-3	190	12/16/60	Grand Valley State	8
84	Clark, L.	WR	6-0	199	7/3/64	Mississippi State	4
53	Comeaux, D.	LB	6-1	239	4/15/60	Arizona State	9
3	*Donnelly, R.	P	6-0	190	2/17/62	Wyoming	6
31	*Edmonds, B.J.	RB	5-11	186	9/26/64	Arkansas	5
54	Feasel, G.	C	6-7	279	6/28/60	Abilene Christian	6
44	Fenner, D.	RB	6-3	229	4/6/67	North Carolina	2
90	Franklin, J.	DE	6-1	258	10/25/65	Fresno State	2
1	Garcia, T.	K	5-10	187	6/4/64	Northeastern La.	3
22	Glasgow, N.	S	5-10	187	4/15/57	Washington	12
79	Green, J.	DE	6-3	254	1/21/57	Texas A&M	11
29	Harper, D.	CB	5-11	174	3/29/66	South Carolina St	3
33	Harris, E.	RB	5-9	218	8/18/66	Eastern Kentucky	2
63	Hart, R.	DT	6-1	279	7/10/65	South Carolina	2
66	Heck, A.	T	6-6	291	1/1/67	Notre Dame	2
85	*Heller, R.	TE	6-3	236	9/18/63	Oregon State	4
27	Hunter, P.	CB	5-11	186	10/24/64	Nevada-Reno	5
26	Jefferson, J.	CB	6-1	199	11/18/63	Texas A&M	2
24	Jenkins, M.	CB	5-10	182	3/16/62	Cincinnati	4
9	Johnson, N.	K	6-2	197	5/31/60	UCLA	9
30	Jones, J.	FB	6-2	229	3/21/61	Florida	8
81	Kane, T.	WR	5-11	176	1/14/64	Syracuse	3
15	Kemp, J.	QB	6-0	201	7/11/59	Dartmouth	10
58	Kimmel, J.	LB	6-3	235	3/28/62	Syracuse	3
17	Krieg, D.	QB	6-1	192	10/20/58	Milton	11
70	Mattes, R.	T	6-6	302	8/8/63	Virginia	5
86	McNeal, T.	TE	6-3	248	1/10/67	UT-Chattanooga	2
71	Millard, B.	G	6-5	281	12/2/60	Texas	7
91	Miller, D.	LB	6-1	236	3/24/65	Tennessee	3
72	Nash, J.	DT	6-2	269	10/11/60	Boston College	9
97	Porter, R.	LB	6-1	221	5/18/65	Southern U.	3
98	Ridgle, E.	DE	6-5	270	6/24/63	Nevada-Reno	2
41	Robinson, E.	S	6-0	186	5/28/63	Colgate	6
5	Rodriguez, R.	P	6-2	217	3/3/65	Arizona	4
82	Skansi, P.	WR	5-11	186	1/11/61	Washington	8
11	Stouffer, K.	QB	6-3	207	7/6/64	Colorado State	3
56	Tofflemire, J.	C	6-2	274	7/7/65	Arizona	2
87	Tyler, R.	TE	6-5	257	10/12/65	South Carolina St	2
74	Wheat, W.	G	6-6	274	5/13/67	Brigham Young	1
4	Williams, D.	WR	5-11	180	8/25/60	UCLA	6
32	Williams, J.L.	FB	5-11	228	11/23/64	Florida	5
57	Woods, T.	DE	6-4	264	9/11/65	Pittsburgh	4
92	Wyman, D.	LB	6-2	242	3/31/64	Stanford	4

*Plan B free agent

THE BEST IN THE BIZ

UNSUNG HEROES

The Game's Least-Known, Most Valuable Players

Why are some players underrated? Why do some have productive careers yet rarely find the limelight?

Not all things of value shine brightly. Leadership, confidence, reliability, durability, selflessness and fitting into a team's scheme usually don't get Page One headlines. But any one of these qualities can quietly make the difference between a team spending its winter holidays at home, or in the heat of a Super Bowl race.

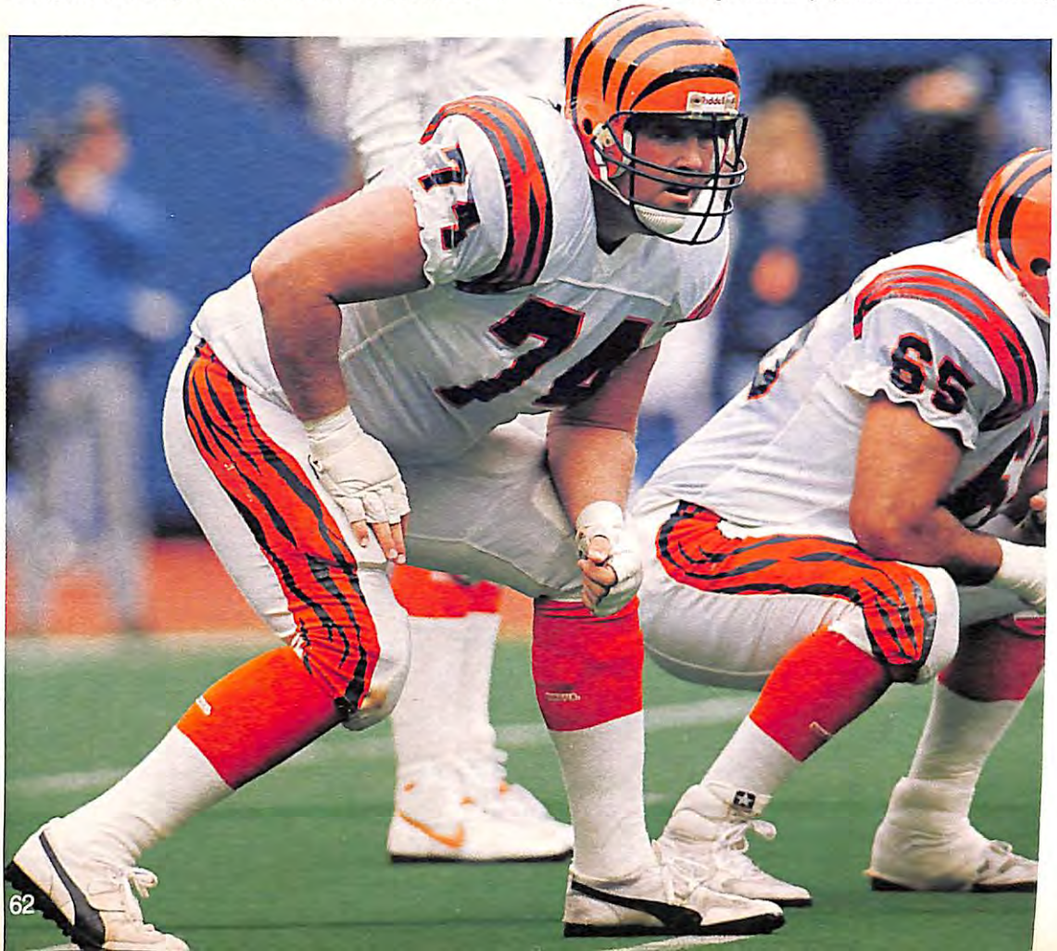
AFC EAST

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS—Some guys can't take a hint. You know him, the undrafted, stopgap player management tries to replace very year. In New England, his name is **Ed Reynolds**. The Pats cut him in 1983, only to re-sign him later in the same season. They even drafted Vincent Brown, who many feel will become a Pro Bowl player, in the second round two years ago. Nothing has worked. No one has been able to budge Reynolds from the starting inside linebacker spot he secured in 1988. Last season the free agent from Virginia led the team in tackles with 141, including 82 initial hits and a team-high 59 assists. Reynolds has developed a reputation for being in the right place at the right time, thanks to intense study and film review. "Ed Reynolds is one of the most disciplined, hard-nosed competitors that I have ever seen," Pats general manager Pat Sullivan said. "Fans around the league may not be aware of Ed Reynolds. But I can guarantee that the offensive players around the league sure know who he is." Pats wide receiver Cedric Jones is another who specializes in on-field production rather than off-the-field promotion.

INDIANAPOLIS COLTS—If you're a defensive back and this guy pulls away from you, better look for a new job on Monday. Colts wide receiver **Bill Brooks** isn't fast, nor is he likely to be in Honolulu come Pro Bowl time. Yet, over the past four years, Brooks has averaged 58.3 receptions, the highest career average among the Colts' all-time top 10 receivers. With 1,131 receiving yards in 1986, he joined Raymond Berry and Roger Carr as the only Colts receivers to surpass the 1,000-yard mark in a season. Last year, all he did was grab 63 passes (919 yards) and put together a streak of 19 consecutive first-down receptions. Colts coach Ron Meyer marvels at Brooks' approach in meetings, in the weight room and on the practice field. "Bill is the success story which goes unnoticed until you look at how a game is won."

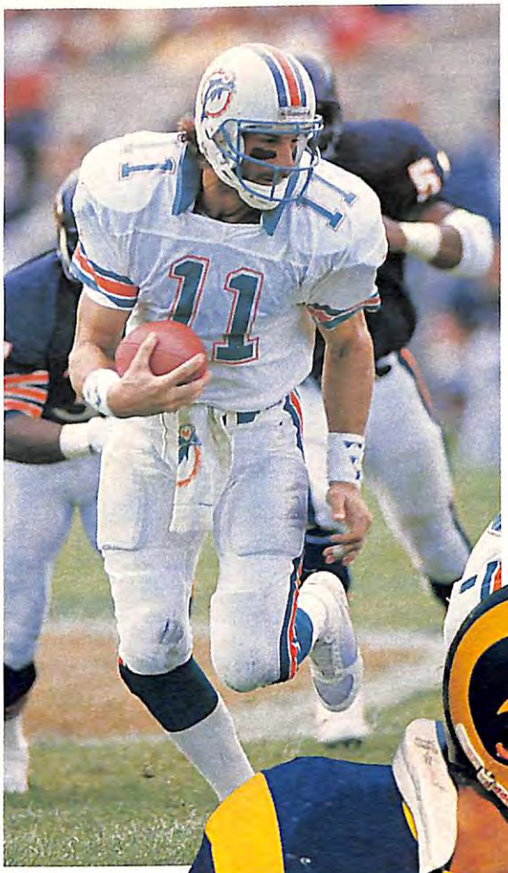
BUFFALO BILLS—Shane Conlan has been picked to the last two Pro Bowls. Cornelius Bennett is another All-Pro. Ray Bentley writes children's books. But while these Buffalo linebackers get most of the ink, none have filled team needs like versatile **Scott Radecic**. When knee injuries ravaged Bentley (weak inside linebacker), Conlan (strong inside) and Bennett (left outside) in separate stretches last season, Radecic replaced each. When Darryl Talley held out during the preseason, he was even the No. 1 man at right outside linebacker. Radecic's quick play recognition makes him a key to the Bills' defense. "He may not have the great skill of the Bennetts and Conlans," defensive coordinator Walt Corey said, "but he makes up for it with intelligence...and preparation."

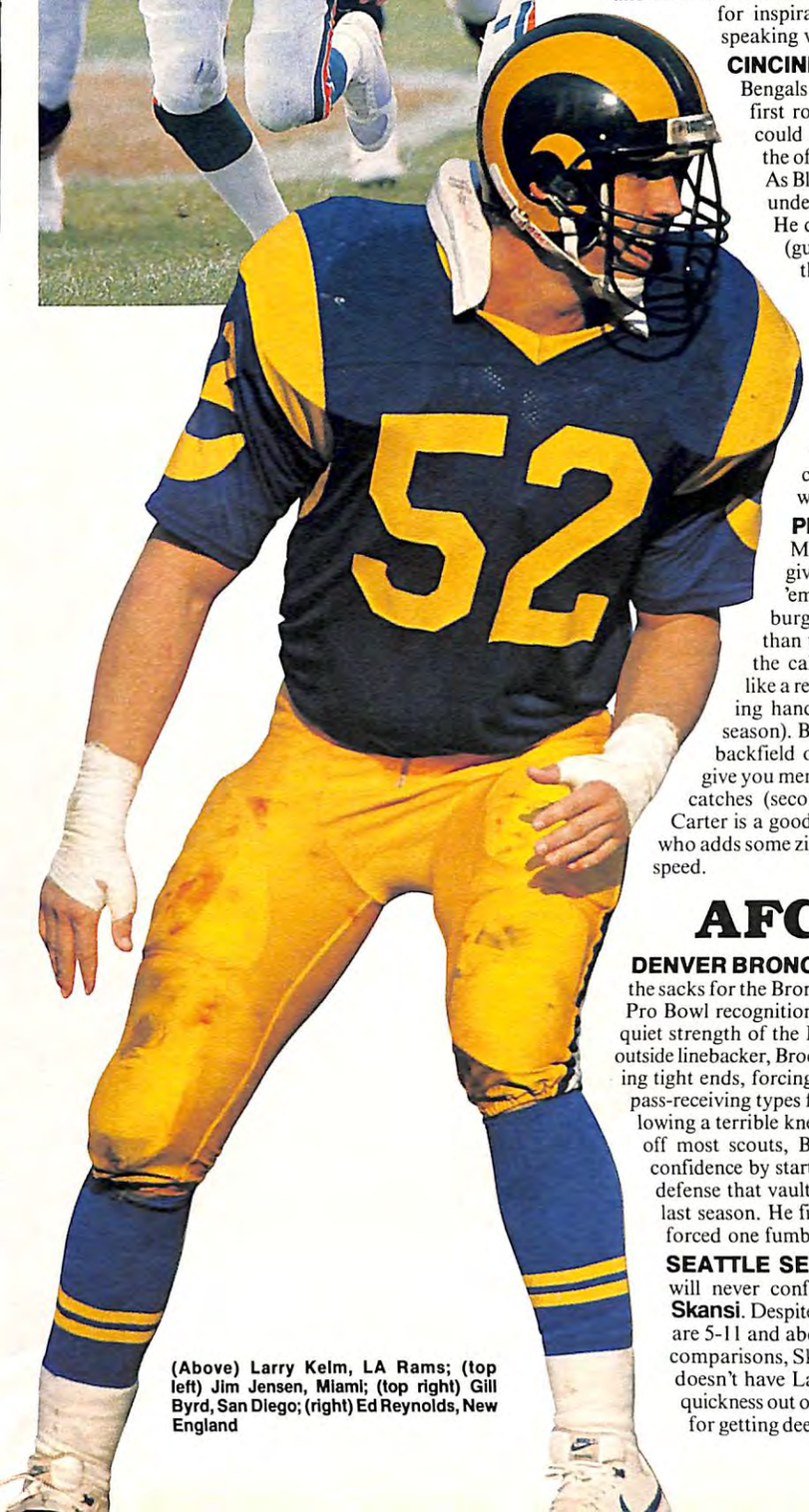
(Above) Mark Murphy, Green Bay; (below) Brian Blados, Cincinnati

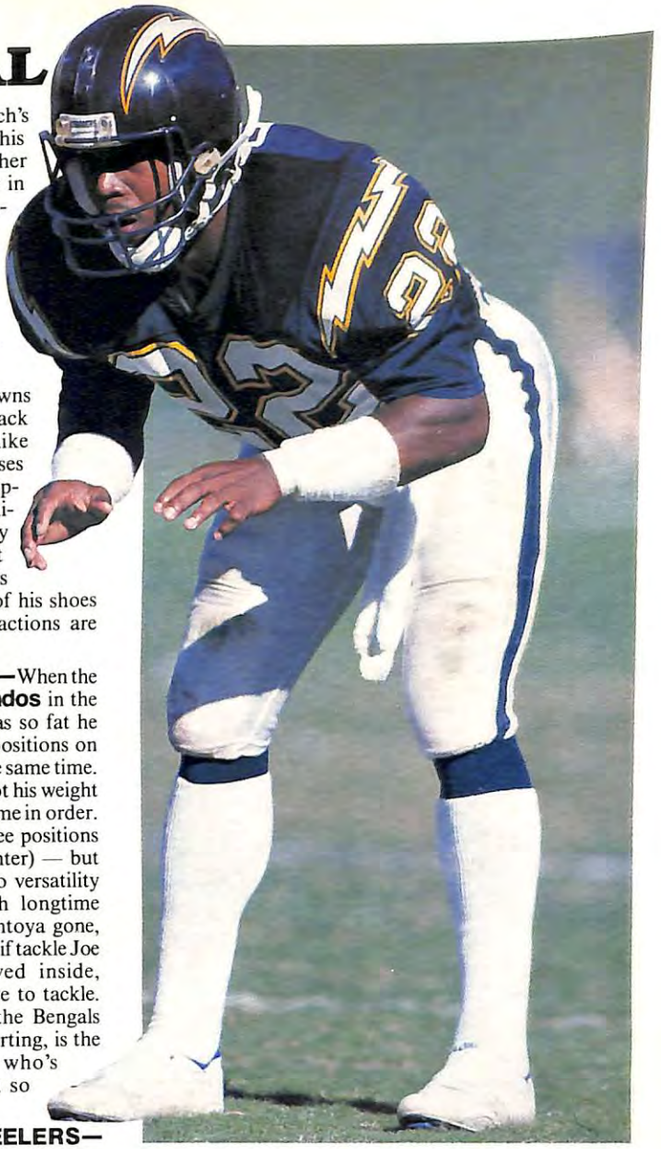


MIAMI DOLPHINS—To call **Jim Jensen** "Mr. Everything" is an understatement. During the past nine seasons with the Dolphins, he has played wide receiver, quarterback, halfback, fullback, tight end, holder, long-snapper for punts and virtually everywhere on special teams. "You know," coach Don Shula said, "he could line up at both safeties and do the job for you. He wouldn't have the range you want, but in a pinch, he'd get it done. He's an amazing, remarkable player." Another of Jensen's specialties is picking up first downs. In his NFL career, he has touched the ball 64 times on third down (48 receptions, 16 carries) and has picked up 52 first downs (81 percent). Last year, he reached single-season career highs with 61 receptions (557 yards) and six receiving touchdowns. In 1989, he blocked a punt and completed a 19-yard pass, both resulting in touchdowns. "Jim is always ready to play and to make the plays that help us win," Shula said. "He's one of the real joys of my coaching career."

NEW YORK JETS—Every year, wide receiver **JoJo Townsell** has come to training camp scared to death for his job. This year, he can relax. Townsell (5-9, 180), viewed by many as a one-dimensional player, had dutifully served as a punt returner and third or fourth receiver. But with Al Toon and Wesley Walker embroiled in contract holdouts last season, Townsell got his chance. And did he shine. Intense and dedicated, he led the Jets in average per catch, grabbing 45 passes for 787 yards (17.5) and five touchdowns. Throw in his 9.1-yard average on punt returns — third-best in the AFC — and it's no wonder Townsell's teammates selected him as the MVP in a miserable year.







AFC CENTRAL

HOUSTON OILERS—Want to know a coach's dream player? One who plays hard, keeps his mouth shut and improves every season. In other words, **Curtis Duncan**. The fourth receiver in an offense that — fortunately for him — employs four wideouts in passing situations, Duncan is neither flashy nor acrobatic, nor an electrifying runner after the catch. All he does is get open and catch the ball, last year 43 times for 613 yards and five touchdowns. Not bad for a 10th-round draft choice finishing up his third season.

CLEVELAND BROWNS—While the Browns starting corners slipped last season, nickel back **Mark Harper** came off the bench and played like a million bucks. He led the team with 18 passes defensed and tied for second with three interceptions. This season, he should push Frank Minnifield for a starting job. Unlike a lot of cocky corners who talk a big game, Harper is quiet and unassuming, credits God for his success and even has crosses drawn on the toes of his shoes for inspiration. So far, his actions are speaking very loudly, indeed.

CINCINNATI BENGALS—When the Bengals selected **Brian Blados** in the first round in 1984, he was so fat he could have played three positions on the offensive line — at the same time. As Blados matured, he got his weight under control and his game in order. He can still take up three positions (guard, tackle and center) — but these days it's due to versatility not obesity. With longtime guard Max Montoya gone, Blados may start; if tackle Joe Walter is moved inside, Blados can move to tackle. The only thing the Bengals lose by Blados starting, is the valuable reserve who's come off the bench so well for so long.

PITTSBURGH STEELERS—Merril Hoge and Tim Worley give the Steelers plenty of rock-'em sock-'em. But when Pittsburgh is looking for more lightning than thunder, **Rodney Carter** gets the call. A running back who plays like a receiver, Carter is forgettable taking handoffs (11 carries, 16 yards last season). But line him up in the slot, in the backfield or as a wide receiver, and he'll give you memorable performances. With 38 catches (second on the team) last season, Carter is a good-hands passing game specialist who adds some zip to an offense sorely lacking in speed.

AFC WEST

DENVER BRONCOS—Simon Fletcher may get the sacks for the Broncos and Karl Mecklenburg the Pro Bowl recognition, but **Michael Brooks** is the quiet strength of the Denver defense. As strongside outside linebacker, Brooks can manhandle most blocking tight ends, forcing the play inside, and keep the pass-receiving types from releasing downfield. Following a terrible knee injury in college that scared off most scouts, Brooks rewarded his coaches' confidence by starting and contributing to a run defense that vaulted from 27th in 1988 to sixth last season. He finished third with 123 tackles, forced one fumble and recovered two others.

SEATTLE SEAHAWKS—NFL historians will never confuse Steve Largent and **Paul Skansi**. Despite some surface similarities (both are 5-11 and about 190) and some overzealous comparisons, Skansi is not a Largent clone. He doesn't have Largent's guile, nor his lightning quickness out of cuts, nor his incorrigible knack for getting deep. In fact, he's awfully slow and

(Above) Larry Kelm, LA Rams; (top left) Jim Jensen, Miami; (top right) Gill Byrd, San Diego; (right) Ed Reynolds, New England

FOOTBALL GUYS AND OTHER UNSUNG TALENT PROSPECTORS

'Football Men' heading football teams? What a concept. It's also the latest NFL organizational trend. Hence, *Don Heinrich's Pro Preview* presents a list of the league's finest, albeit little-known, front office performers.

The NFL's recently negotiated television contract rewards 28 team owners with payoffs previously associated with people like rock stars, drug dealers and Wall Street inside traders. With all this new money, one wouldn't be surprised if team bean-counters grew in numbers. After all, more beans beget more bean-counters, right?

While accountant/administrator types will forever huddle around pro football's bottom line, their days as supreme beings in the eyes of NFL owners appear numbered. In 1989 and thus far in 1990, the NFL trend is a de-emphasis on the money-changer and a re-emphasis on the "football man," the guy with a solid, extensive background in coaching and/or scouting. The football man is taking on far-reaching powers within the decision-making process.

"I used to think we were like dinosaurs," said New York Giants general manager George Young, a renowned football man who broke in when then-Baltimore Colts coach Don Shula paid him a few bucks to break down films. "Now I look around and see there are more and more of us. I may be a little bit biased, but, personally, I think it's good for the game."

Bobby Beathard, after a year's hiatus to dabble in television, is back, summoned to the Left Coast to re-energize the San Diego Chargers. Dick Steinberg left the New England Patriots for the task of teaching the Jets how to fly again. Ken Herock gained new powers in Atlanta. Ditto Larry Wilson in Phoenix. Tom Flores took over in Seattle. Carl Peterson heads the show in Kansas City.

"It seems like owners are putting the power where it belongs," said Steinberg. "They feel more comfortable with a football man at the top."

The '89 season proved that having a football man atop the organization was a very, very good idea. Of the NFL's 28 teams, the football operations of 75 percent (21 clubs) now are conducted by football men. The cumulative record of those 21 teams in 1989 was 176-158-2, a winning percentage of .526. Only five of the 21 clubs had losing records. Football men delivered solid results.

"It's essential to have that perspective from a football guy," offered Cleveland Browns executive vice president Ernie Accorsi. "It's like the separation of church and state. A coach, well, he faces the pressure of having to win now. Someone has to look out for the long term, to set a plan in place."

Which is not to say that NFL middle or mid-upper level management types never again will be considered as general manager timber. But for now, *Don Heinrich's Pro Preview* focuses on the NFL's underrated "football men." Some listed below are young and on the rise. Others are older and probably have seen the big title pass them by. For all, their battlefield is in the meeting rooms, on the phone, watching film or behind a pair of binoculars on the scouting trail.

These are not the Beathards, Steinbergs, Petersons, Youngs, Davises or Walshes of relative front office fame. These are the behind-the-scenes workers you won't find pressed by post-game TV cameras, or find spewing champagne in victorious locker rooms. Yet they are all important players whose contributions can make a critical difference in their team's success.

FRONT OFFICE UNSUNG HEROES

1. TONY RAZZANO, Director of College Scouting, San Francisco 49ers—Former coach Bill Walsh always received credit as the trigger man for the club's perennial draft-day trades — and he deserves no less credit — but it was Razzano who often provided the ammunition. It wasn't just serendipitous that so much talent happened to land in the City by the Bay. Nor was it random coincidence that the 49ers plucked Nebraska's Roger Craig as the 49th player (2nd round) in 1983, and saw in brutish fullback Tom Rathman (3rd round, 56th overall) a future NFL pass-catching weapon, and in SMU shotputter Michael Carter (5th round, 122nd overall) a future All-Pro nose tackle. Fact is, Razzano earned his spurs by racking up the miles as an area scout for three NFL teams before joining the 'Niners, and he still works some roads by himself. An old-school scout, Razzano is willing to take a chance and uncovers as much small-school talent as anyone. Yet, like the 49ers organization, Razzano bases decisions on year-round analysis, and doesn't get wild-eyed over bowl-game flashes. "He's essential to our success," said San Francisco owner Eddie DeBartolo Jr.

2. TIM ROONEY, Director of Pro Personnel, New York Giants—A nephew of Steelers founder Art Rooney Sr. and cousin of Pittsburgh president Dan Rooney and vice president Art Rooney Jr., Tim Rooney has more going for him than good bloodlines. He is more than a complementary player in a sterling front office headed by general manager George Young, assistant general manager Harry Hulmes and director of player personnel Tom Boisture. A former player personnel director himself (Pittsburgh, 1972-79 and Detroit, 1980-84), Rooney has a solid coaching and scouting background and a personal memory bank holding untold megabytes of information on players' past, present and future. He routinely chips in as the Giants' advance scout, and is simply one of the best evaluators of pro personnel in the business.

3. JERRY REICHOW, Director of Football Operations, Minnesota Vikings—Overshadowed by general manager Mike Lynn, Reichow has nevertheless been leaned upon heavily over the years. He is particularly adept in uncovering middle-round talent, such as Pro Bowl tight end Steve Jordan (7th round, '82), Pro Bowl cornerback Carl Lee (7th round, '83), wide receiver Hassan Jones (5th, '86), cornerback Reggie Rutland (4th, '87) and defensive tackle Henry Thomas (3rd, '87), to name a few. He's been in the front office since the '60s, bringing experience, expertise and results to the Vikings.

4. MIKE LOMBARDI (no relation), Director of Pro Personnel, Cleveland Browns—Just 31, Lombardi's rise through the ranks has been near-meteoric. From rather inauspicious roots as a nose tackle for Hofstra and an assistant coach with UNLV, to four years with the 49ers ('84-87) and as a Cleveland scout, Lombardi has earned the trust of GM Ernie Accorsi and assumed broad responsibilities. Lombardi is one of the few pro personnel guys in the league who also gets immersed in the college draft. He's even the one who's on the phone talking trades. "He has terrific instincts for this business along with an encyclopedic recall for players and events," said Accorsi. A Bill Walsh disciple, Lombardi is a go-go guy devoted to winning now, and that's what the Browns want.

5. JOHN BUTLER, Director of College Scouting, and BOB FERGUSON, Director of Pro Personnel, (a tag-team entry) Buffalo Bills—Although Buffalo general manager Bill Polian, himself sorely underrated by the public, and coach Marv Levy remain the key power duo for the Bills, Ferguson (13 NFL seasons) and Butler (five seasons) are integral cogs in the club's well-oiled front office machine. Both are astute personnel men with strong scouting backgrounds who fit well into Polian's flexible management style. Summed up one AFC East general manager, offering high praise for a personnel man: "Both are very, very thorough." Neither Ferguson nor Butler is reluctant to offer an opinion, and both have the knowledge to back up their claims. Ferguson has some background in negotiating rookie and free agent contracts, which, down the road, could be a career plus, while Butler needs only more gray hair to establish himself with the league's best.

6. KEN HEROCK, Vice President of Player Personnel, Atlanta Falcons—Atlanta has won only 11 games in three seasons, but don't blame the scouting department lately. No team has more No. 1 picks (13) on its roster heading into the 1990 season. And no NFL team is as poised for dramatic improvement. Of Herock's first 22 draft choices, 17 are still with the club; of the 55 players on the club's roster at the end of the '89 season, 32 were acquired since Herock's arrival in 1986. A tireless worker, his biggest coup was orchestrating the pre-'90 draft trade with Indianapolis, netting six-time Pro Bowl tackle Chris Hinton, promising second-year wideout Andre Rison and a 1991 first-round pick in exchange for the 1990 No. 1 (Jeff George, Illinois QB). A former Raiders player and personnel man who functions as a quasi-general manager for the Falcons, Herock relishes attack-style football and drafts accordingly. "Kenny carries around some of that Raiders arrogance. He's good and he knows it," said one NFC general manager.

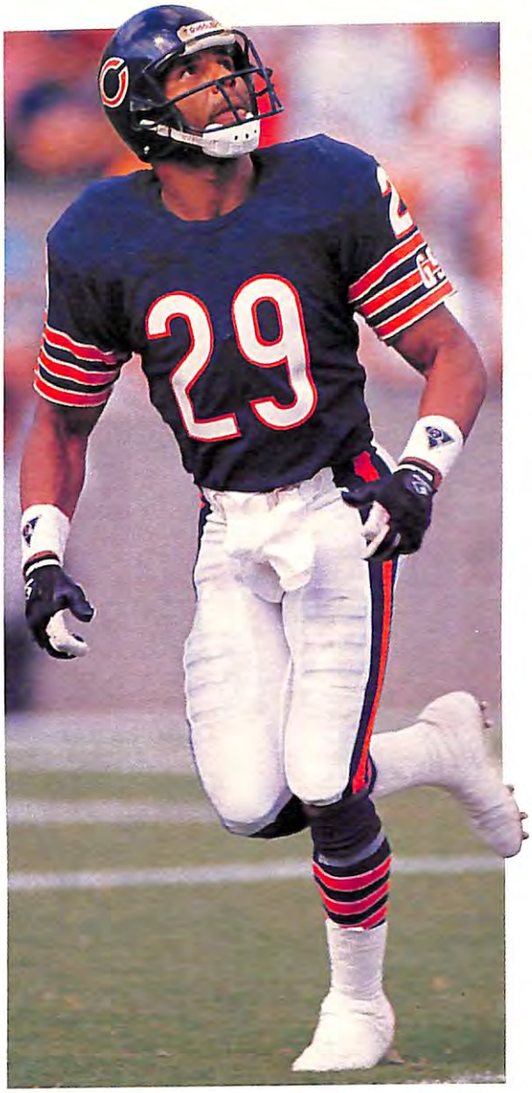
7. JOE WOOLLEY, Director of Player Personnel, Philadelphia Eagles—It's not easy to escape the shadows when working between those twin giant egos, owner Norman Braman and coach Buddy Ryan, so Woolley's reputation has been somewhat stunted since his move to Philly five years ago. Despite Ryan's penchant for making war room calls, Woolley has upgraded the Eagles' personnel department and earned kudos from his peers, most of whom understand his situation. He's a longtime NFL guy and good ol' boy who can handle Ryan's tempestuous ways. In his five seasons with the New Orleans Saints (1981-85), Woolley developed an extensive film library system that is now used by many league clubs. He is an excellent judge of talent and another who doesn't mind standing aside when the curtain rises.

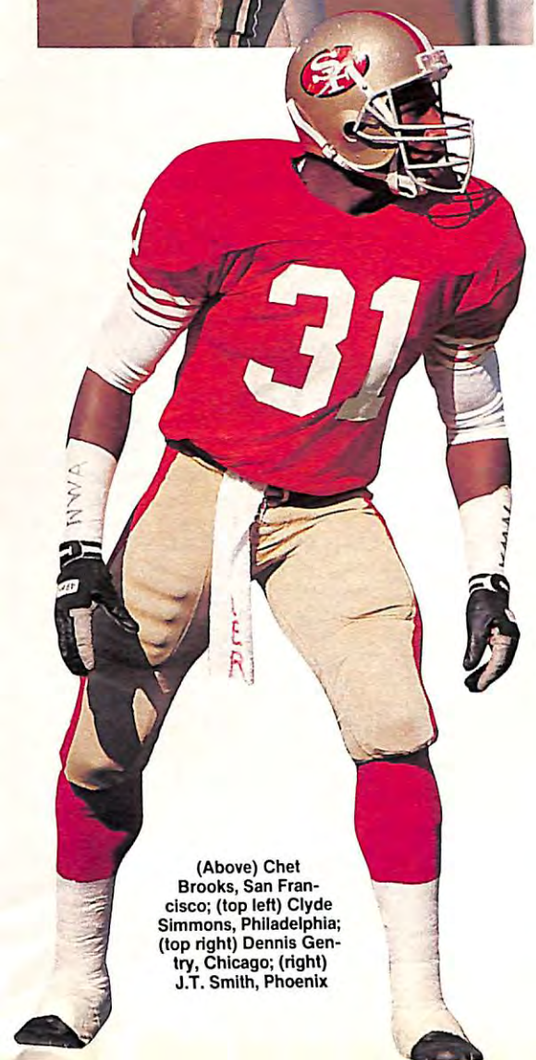
8. DICK CORRICK, Director of College Scouting, Houston Oilers—If Green Bay had listened to this guy in the '70s, perhaps the Pack would have been back by now. A Packers scout ('71-75) before heading their pro personnel department, Corrick lacked the forcefulness to influence the strong personalities of a Bart Starr or Forrest Gregg (before power shifted to Mike Braatz in 1986) or, for that matter, his new boss in Houston (Mike Holovak). But when it comes to the pure and simple art of going out in the field and judging talent, Corrick has few peers.

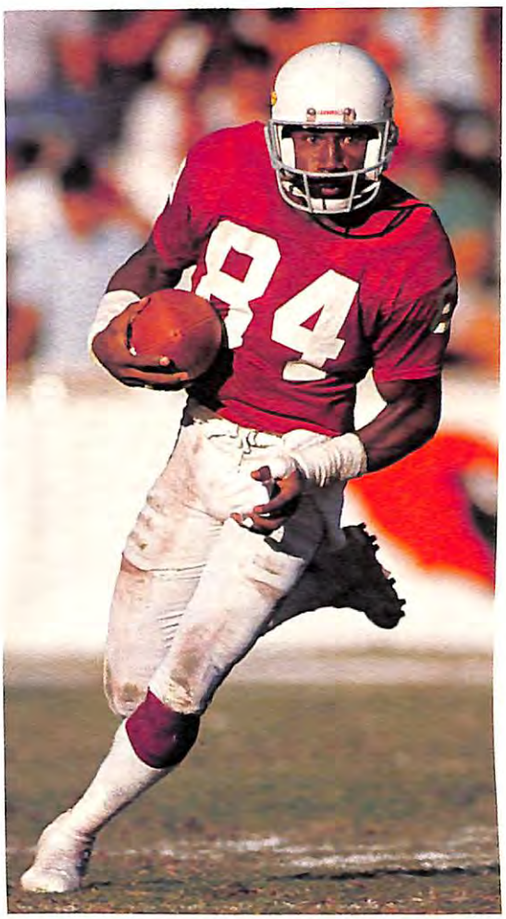
9. JOHN WOOTEN, Director of Pro Personnel, Dallas Cowboys—With the arrival of new owner Jerry Jones and subsequent departures of Tex Schramm, Gil Brandt and Tom Landry, the clout in the Cowboys' front office is now more centralized than in the franchise's previous three decades. That has not kept John Wooten, who played 10 NFL seasons and was named to the Cleveland Browns' all-time team, from standing out as a talent evaluator. After 14 years as an NFL scout, Wooten was appointed to his current position in 1989. Like most men in that spot, he is hard-working and detail-oriented, qualities he'll need if the Cowboys are to regain their glory years. Strong-spirited, hard-willed but still affable, Wooten has more input with Jones and coach Jimmy Johnson than people realize. "We consider John's opinions very, very highly," said Johnson. "The man is a pro."

10. DICK DANIELS, Assistant General Manager, San Diego Chargers—Completing his second decade in the NFL, Daniels is bright, resourceful and, like his high-profile boss, Bobby Beathard, seems to know where the athletic bodies are buried. An astute talent assessor with an eye for middle-round bargains, Daniels played six years as a defensive back in the NFL with three different teams (Dallas, Chicago, Miami) before he began beating the bushes.

10 MORE GOOD ONES—Alan Webb, Director of Pro Scouting, San Francisco; **Tom Donahoe,** Director of Pro Personnel and Development, Pittsburgh; **Whitey Dovell,** Player Personnel Director, Kansas City; **Tom Boisture,** Director of Player Personnel, New York Giants; **Joe Mendes,** Director of Player Operations, New England; **George Saimes,** Director of College Scouting, Washington; **Bill Kuharich,** Director of Player Personnel, New Orleans; **Jon Jalacic** and **Bob Riggle,** College Scouts, Green Bay; **John Math,** Director of Player Personnel, Los Angeles Rams.







(Above) Chet Brooks, San Francisco; (top left) Clyde Simmons, Philadelphia; (top right) Dennis Gentry, Chicago; (right) J.T. Smith, Phoenix

never has had a 100-yard day, scoring eight career touchdowns (to Largent's career 100). But after quietly coming off the bench in third-down situations for six seasons, Skansi stepped forward last season with 39 catches, 488 yards and five TDs as age and injuries reduced Largent's role. Reliable, tough and sure-handed, Skansi is a top-flight possession receiver with several productive years ahead of him.

KANSAS CITY CHIEFS—By the end of the 1989 season, the Chiefs were raving about their outside linebacker from Alabama. "He's playing as well as any linebacker in the league," Kansas City defensive coordinator Bill Cowher said. "Based on the things we've asked him to do, he may be playing as well as anybody on our defense." Rookie linebacker Derrick Thomas from Alabama represented the Chiefs at the Pro Bowl — but the linebacker Cowher was talking about was from the other Alabama school, **Chris Martin** of Auburn. Martin posted a team-runnerup 82 tackles, four forced fumbles, four sacks and three fumble recoveries. He also graded out highest of any linebacker on the NFL's No. 2-ranked defense. "Chris had the kind of year I've seen Clay Matthews have in years he went to the Pro Bowl," Chiefs coach Marty Schottenheimer said. But with seven Pro Bowl teammates on defense, Martin's contribution often goes unnoticed.

LOS ANGELES RAIDERS—With a backfield rife with Heisman hype (a.k.a. Marcus Allen, Bo Jackson), it's easy to overlook talented fullback **Steve Smith**. He doesn't get big yards, just quality yards. Two years ago, he touched the ball only 64 times from scrimmage but led the Raiders with nine touchdowns. He caught 26 passes for 299 yards and was one of only three NFL running backs to post a 100-yard receiving game that season. When he became a full-time starter in 1989, he rushed for a team-runnerup 471 yards and caught 19 passes for 140 more. Exceptionally fast (4.6) for a fullback, his size (6-1, 235) gives the Raiders a guard in the backfield.

SAN DIEGO CHARGERS—Who has led AFC cornerbacks in interceptions each of the last two seasons? Kansas City's Albert Lewis? Cleveland's Frank Minnifield? Try **Gill Byrd**. Picking off seven passes in 1988 and seven more in 1989, Byrd now has 25 career interceptions, good enough for a share of second place in San Diego franchise history. Yet Byrd has no Pro Bowl to show for his seven-year career, even after the Chargers posted the league's sixth-best defense and fourth-best pass defense last season. "Gill had what should have been a Pro Bowl year," defensive coordinator Ron Lynn said. "He has developed into one of the finest people at his position in the AFC." Byrd is as versatile as he is productive. Over his career, he's started nine games at free safety, 16 at strong safety, 21 at right cornerback and 53 at left cornerback, his current position.

NFC EAST

PHILADELPHIA EAGLES—On the Eagles defensive line, **Clyde Simmons** is the only player not to have been a first-round draft pick (9th, 1986), but that hasn't stopped him from playing like one. Overshadowed by Reggie White and Jerome Brown, the Eagles' right defensive end had primarily been an extraordinary special teams laborer (seven blocked kicks) in Buddy Ryan's vineyard. Then last year, he came of age. Simmons added a team-leading 15½ sacks (sixth best in the NFL) to his big-play propensity, forcing three fumbles and scoring a TD on an interception return against the Giants. Recognition? Even his peers forgot him last year. He finished a distant fourth alternate in NFL Pro Bowl player balloting.

WASHINGTON REDSKINS—Figuring to caddie for Dexter Manley and Charles Mann, **Fred Stokes**, a Plan B acquisition from the Rams, was thrust into a starting right defensive end position in Week 11 against Denver following Manley's drug-policy suspension and Markus Koch's knee injury. On his first series, Stokes made a sack and recovered a fumble. Despite limited action, Stokes gave the 'Skins more big plays with three sacks, three tackles for losses and three forced fumbles. His steady play against the run was a welcome change from Manley's upfield game. Stokes' five starts at the end of the season also happened to coincide with the club's five-game winning streak.

DALLAS COWBOYS—One would think that on a team as bad as the Cowboys, solid contributions would be

hard to miss. Yet, due to a late arrival and a gradual melding into the Dallas defensive scheme, it took tackle **Dean Hamel** some time to become a force. At 6-3 and 290 pounds, Hamel was a big reason why, over the season's last eight games, the Dallas defense held opponents to a league-low 3.8 yards a carry. Individually, Hamel started in 13 games and made 68 tackles, including a team-second 3½ sacks. Nearly as important, he was a steadying influence in the beleaguered Cowboys locker room.

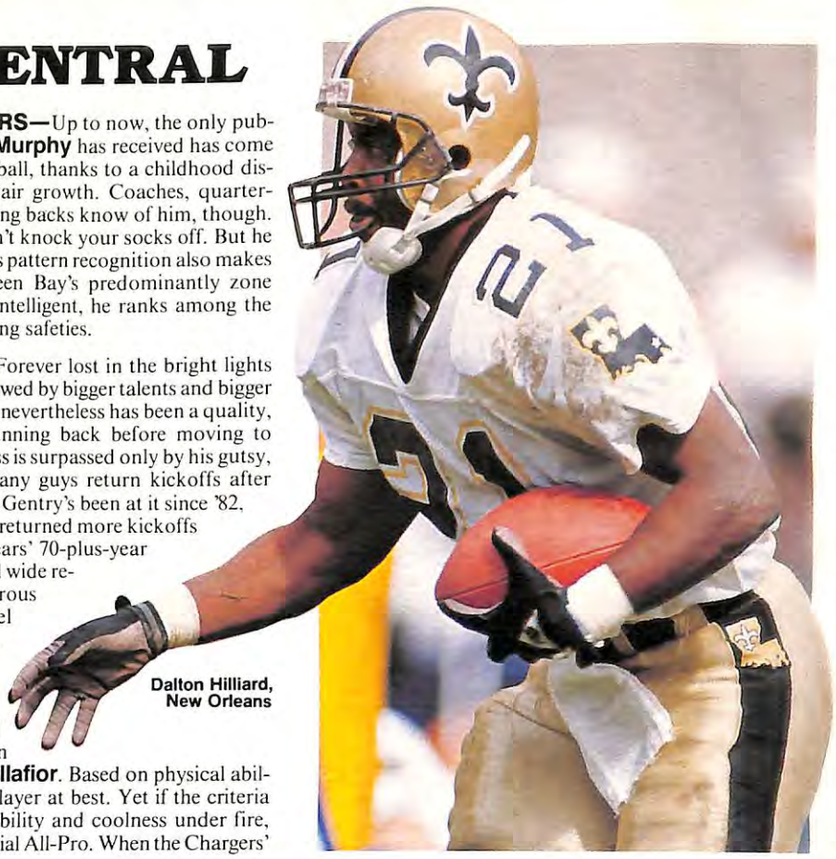
NEW YORK GIANTS—The Giants pass defense jumped from 18th in 1988 to seventh last year, largely because of the improvement of left cornerback **Mark Collins**. While rookie strong safety Myron Guyton (team-high 99 tackles) also deserves consideration, it's Collins' terrific man coverage that allows the Giants to rotate their safety help to other parts of the field. Collins was fourth on the team in tackles (84), had 12 passes defensed and two interceptions. With a bit more production in the theft area — he doesn't have great hands — his days on underrated lists are numbered.

PHOENIX CARDINALS—Going into last season, no NFL receiver had caught more passes the previous three years than **J.T. Smith**. He was about to make that four years before a season-ending ankle injury robbed him of his league lead in receptions (62), on pace to break Art Monk's season record of 106 catches. It wasn't the first time in his 13 seasons he'd been deprived of his share of bows. A possession receiver with some pizazz, he lacks the glitter heaped upon the league's deep threats. He led the circuit in receptions (91) and receiving yardage (1,117) in 1987 but didn't get to the Pro Bowl. He made it in '88, only because Jerry Rice withdrew with an ankle injury. Most figured his career was over about the time the team moved from St. Louis. After all, no one is supposed to be this good, this long (he turns 35 Oct. 20).

NFC CENTRAL

GREEN BAY PACKERS—Up to now, the only publicity strong safety **Mark Murphy** has received has come from being bald as a cue ball, thanks to a childhood disorder that curtailed all hair growth. Coaches, quarterbacks, receivers and running backs know of him, though. His 4.75 40-yard time won't knock your socks off. But he will. Murphy's tremendous pattern recognition also makes him a perfect fit for Green Bay's predominantly zone schemes. Dedicated and intelligent, he ranks among the league's upper half of strong safeties.

CHICAGO BEARS—Forever lost in the bright lights of Chicago, and overshadowed by bigger talents and bigger mouths, **Dennis Gentry** nevertheless has been a quality, big-play performer. A running back before moving to wide receiver, his quickness is surpassed only by his gutsy, north-south style. Not many guys return kickoffs after their second or third year; Gentry's been at it since '82, his rookie season, and has returned more kickoffs than any player in the Bears' 70-plus-year history. An explosive third wide receiver, he is equally dangerous on the third-down shovel pass, a Mike Ditka favorite.



Dalton Hilliard, New Orleans

DETROIT LIONS—Few around the league have gotten more mileage out of the game's "intangibles" than offensive lineman **Ken Dallafior**. Based on physical ability, he's a limited, fringe player at best. Yet if the criteria were heart, versatility, stability and coolness under fire, Dallafior would be a perennial All-Pro. When the Chargers' third-year free agent who started in front of him last season. Unless, of course, Alan Veingrad is a Hall of Famer, too.

THE OVER-BILLED

Unsung heroes? Hardly. Given the spotlights shone on these guys, they should all be wearing sunglasses. There's still some quality here, but their reputations far exceed recent performances.

BILL FRALIC, OT, Atlanta Falcons—It's a shame he's gone to the last four Pro Bowls when players like Green Bay tackle Ken Ruettgers sit home year after year. Injuries haven't helped Fralic any, but the fact is, his pass protection has eroded terribly in the last three years. With near-zero ability to adjust to any kind of movement — forget stunts, we're talking about anyone who doesn't line up on his nose — Falcon quarterbacks are in jeopardy. Despite being a strong run blocker, he does stupid things like running his guy downfield after the whistle, often into the same official who's readying to throw the flag. Real clever.

WILLIE GAULT, WR, LA Raiders—Al Davis gave up a No. 1 pick to find out what the Bears already knew. Gault caught only 28 passes, missed as many and must have been exempted in his contract from running routes over the middle.

HERSCHEL WALKER, RB, Minnesota Vikings—An impressive size/speed package has blinded most from realizing Walker is actually one of the league's worst outside runners. Teams neutralize his straight-line speed by stringing him out, then wait for those predictable fake-in, go-out moves. What's worse for a guy his size, he's not physical, let alone reckless. When trapped, he "creeps," gathering himself to go down long before the hit comes. As Vikings coaches are learning the hard way, Walker is a very, very limited runner.

QUARTERBACK, New Orleans Saints—Take your pick. On the basis of a fast finish last season, the Saints think they have a savior in John Fourcade, thus making him one of the quickest to achieve "overrated" status. Fourcade is a refugee from the CFL, USFL and Arena Football League, and if that doesn't tell you enough, check out his sophisticated reading ability — drop back, look once, then run. Bobby Hebert is another non-producer under pressure, who now wants out of New Orleans. He throws for a high completion rate in a short-passing attack, but has only six more touchdowns (57) than interceptions in five seasons.

MIKE SINGLETARY, LB, Chicago Bears—It's not for lack of effort or heart that this proud warrior appears here. Age and eroding skills have reduced this great competitor to a tackle-to-tackle linebacker. Gone are his once-great outside pursuit, quickness and ability to drop into coverage. The top guy at his position throughout most of the '80s, Singletary rarely makes scouts' top 10 lists these days. That's okay, Monday Night Football probably will still call him the best in the business.

JAY SCHROEDER, QB, LA Raiders—LA gave up All-Pro tackle Jim Lachey for what is turning out to be a backup quarterback. He started part-time in '89, had a 46.9 completion average and threw five more interceptions (13) than touchdowns. From championship days with the Redskins to getting beat out by Steve Beuerlein, Schroeder has gone from penthouse to outhouse.

JIM KELLY, QB, Buffalo Bills—Kelly won't be heading many leadership seminars. It's tough to publicly criticize your best receiver and running back when your own game is subpar. If Kelly were a duck hunter, he'd be strictly a club ace — he can drill the clay pigeons, but when he has to move around in the wild, his percentage goes down in a hurry. He has a great receiver, top running backs, a good kicker and a killer defense, yet comes up with too many bad days (vs. Cincinnati, 1988) when it really counts. Fact is, his best days were with the Houston Gamblers.

THE YOUNG AND OVERRATED

It's still too early to write them off, but it's time these guys start honing their game instead of hoarding the headlines.

TONY MANDARICH, OT, Green Bay Packers—The football world was ready to induct him into the Hall of Fame until he put on NFL pads. Then they saw him pass block. Ooops. If Mandarich is going to make it to Canton, he'll first have to prove he's better than

AUNDRAY BRUCE, LB, Atlanta Falcons—Here's another draft star (Mandarich was taken second in 1989; Bruce first in 1988) who couldn't crack the starting lineup. Twelve QB sacks in two seasons is hardly eye-popping. The only pursuit Bruce has is that of unfulfilled potential. He gives up too early on plays, gets stuck to blocks and winds up in the wrong place in pass coverage. Look for Bruce in the lost and floundering.

BRIAN BOSWORTH, LB, Seattle Seahawks—Admittedly, The Boz would had to have been the second coming of Dick Butkus to live up to his incredible hype. Nobody has arrived in the NFL with more self-generated hoopla and created less of a whimper. His legacy is that of a non-productive player with arthritic shoulders who accomplished only one thing: cleaning out Seattle's cash drawer.

MORE DON'T-DESERVE-PRIME-TIME PLAYERS:

Jim McMahon, QB, former San Diego Chargers—A battered body and less-talented surroundings made this one-time Bears hero mortal in a hurry.

Shane Conlan, LB, Buffalo—He'll flash with a big hit, but what about the other 65 plays? Primarily a "phone-booth" linebacker (lacks range, change-of-direction), he lacks the physical tools to live up to the "great linebacker" tag many want to push on him.

Erik McMillan, FS, New York Jets—Big plays and New York media hype have put McMillan in the Pro Bowl in each of his two seasons. He has a nose for the ball, all right, but he's no Pro Bowl player. Not yet. He's a poor tackler, has below-average man coverage skills and makes too many mistakes.

Tony Eason, QB, New York Jets—Old man Steve Grogan drove him to the bench, which is where he belongs.

Jacob Green, DE, Seattle Seahawks—The first-step spark is gone from this once-lightning quick defensive end. Despite plenty of pride, fight and fury, Green is a marquee name with a matinee act. Under 250, he is defenseless against today's mashing offensive tackles.

line was beset with busts (John Clay, James FitzPatrick) in 1988, Dallafior found himself starting 13 games, 11 at left tackle, and was a cohesive force. When Lions rookie Mike Utley went down early last season, Dallafior got the call and again came through. A fifth-round pick of Pittsburgh, he's a loyal, tough ol' boy who's lasted longer than most of the '82 OL draftees.

TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS—The Bucs talk about their talent at linebacker. Kevin Murphy. Winston Moss. Ervin Randle. Broderick Thomas. But none have been as productive over the last two years as **Eugene Marve**, a starter at Buffalo for six seasons before an elbow injury put him on IR for most of the '87 season. In one of Perkins' precious few good moves, the Bucs picked up Marve for an eighth-round pick and plugged him in immediately at inside linebacker, where he is credited for helping Randle learn the system and groove into reads. Marve played well, too, both in coverage and against the run, leading the team in tackles in '88 and finishing second to Randle last season.

MINNESOTA VIKINGS—Everybody loves this guy. Coaches, scouts, media. Not the fans, because they don't know him. Not opponents, either, because he is too darn strong and shrewd to play against. All the press goes to Keith Millard and Chris Doleman, or now to Al Noga, who joined the sack parade last year. But ever wonder who was the defensive tackle tying up two blockers so Millard and Noga could run free on stunts in Floyd Peters' under defense? Poor **Henry Thomas**. And with the others not even paying lip service to the run, it was old Henry who had to hold down the fort and handle the double-team block on the inevitable draw plays. Exceptionally strong and surprisingly quick, Thomas still found time to rush the passer. Minnesota has its share of selfish prima donnas, but Thomas isn't one of them.

NFC WEST

LOS ANGELES RAMS—Overshadowed by sackman Kevin Greene, linebacker **Larry Kelm** is the man who really makes the Rams crazy "Eagle" defense go. Lining up over the tight end most of the time, Kelm is a rock defending the run. With Fred Strickland hurt last year, the fourth round pick out of Texas A&M quietly took up the slack with heady, steady play. Teammate Buford McGee, one of the league's best blocking backs and an able pass-catcher, is a situational player and another deserving of mention.

SAN FRANCISCO 49ers—When strong safety Jeff Fuller suffered a career-ending injury Oct. 22 against New England, the 49ers secondary appeared, for a time, vulnerable. After all, gone was a fifth-round find who had developed into a fine player. What does San Francisco do? Just put in another draft nugget, this time an 11th-rounder ('88) who had done little more than chase kickoffs. **Chet Brooks** stuffed the run, played with instincts and intelligence and stood up to every offensive game plan aimed at him. On a stage surrounded by Super Bowl stars, Brooks played a supporting role and probably had the best Pro Bowl-caliber season no one knew about.

ATLANTA FALCONS—Lost in a porous run defense, lost in the shadows of big-college linebacker talents Marcus Cotton (USC) and Aundray Bruce (Auburn), is an undersized (5-11, 230) torpedo out of Division II Valdosta State in Georgia. He led the Falcons in tackles last season from his inside linebacker post and should be even more effective in new coach Jerry Glanville's attacking schemes. **Jessie Tuggle** steps up and fills like a wrecking ball. Forget the fact that he couldn't cover the ballboy; Tuggle figures to be turned loose on the blitz under Glanville, even in nickel situations. Forget, too, his chances for Pro Bowl notoriety — New Orleans' Sam Mills has already filled the spot for All-Pro midget linebackers.

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS—Eric Dickerson, Herschel Walker, Roger Craig, Marcus Allen. . .**Dalton Hilliard**? This explosive performer may not get top billing, but he's soon to break into the league's upper crust. Most front offices had Hilliard pegged as a situational back in passing situations or an occasional third-down draw play before the Saints discovered they had a great back who could turn the corner, too. The local kid from LSU rushed for 425 yards (as a rookie in '86), to 508 (13th in NFC), to 823 (8th NFC) before last year's 1,262 yards (3rd NFC) and 13 touchdowns. He's a perfect fit for the '90s — a strong, fast, compact runner and receiver. Linebacker Pat Swilling (16½ sacks in '89) is another who's produced far beyond his press clippings.

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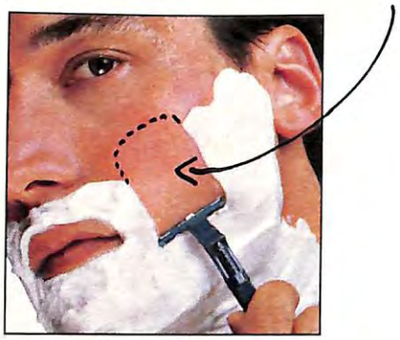
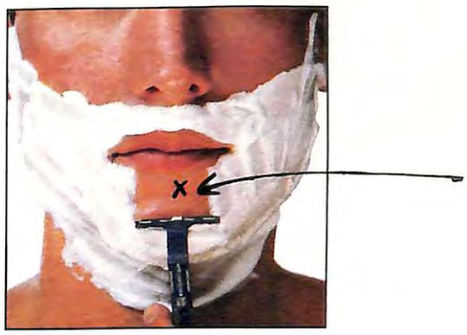
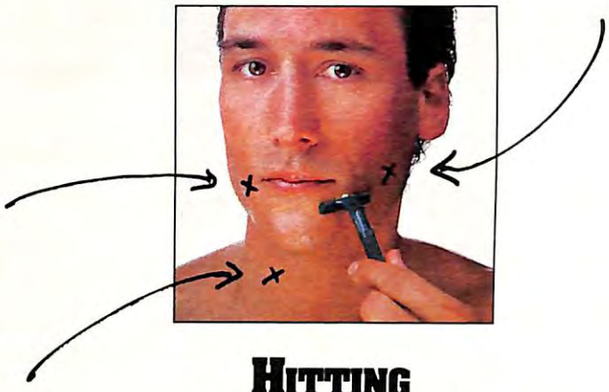


HANDLING THE ZONE.



PENETRATING THE LANE.

HOW JIM PAXSON SHAVES EVERY PLACE ON HIS FACE.



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PRESENTS THE

1990 SCHEDULES

SUPERBOWL XXV, Jan. 27, at Tampa Stadium

Jan. 5, First-round playoffs
Jan. 6, First-round playoffs
Jan. 12, Second-round playoffs
Jan. 13, Second-round playoffs
Jan. 20, Championship game

BUFFALO

S	9	Indianapolis	4pm
S	16	at Miami	1pm
*S	24	at NY Jets (Mon.)	9pm
S	30	Denver	1pm
*O	7	LA Raiders (Sun. night)	7:30pm
O	14	Open Date	
O	21	NY Jets	1pm
O	28	at New England	1pm
N	4	at Cleveland	1pm
N	11	Phoenix	1pm
N	18	New England	1pm
*N	26	at Houston (Mon.)	8pm
D	2	Philadelphia	1pm
D	9	at Indianapolis	1pm
*D	15	at NY Giants (Sat.)	12:30pm
D	23	Miami	1pm
D	30	at Washington	1pm

CINCINNATI

S	9	NY Jets	4pm
S	16	at San Diego	1pm
S	23	New England	1pm
*O	1	at Seattle (Mon.)	6pm
*O	7	at LA Rams	1pm
O	14	Houston	1pm
*O	22	at Cleveland (Mon.)	9pm
*O	28	at Atlanta (Sun. night)	8pm
N	4	New Orleans	1pm
N	11	Open Date	
*N	18	Pittsburgh (Sun. night)	8pm
N	25	Indianapolis	1pm
D	2	at Pittsburgh	1pm
D	9	San Francisco	1pm
*D	16	at LA Raiders	1pm
D	23	at Houston	12pm
D	30	Cleveland	1pm

CLEVELAND

S	9	Pittsburgh	4pm
S	16	at NY Jets	1pm
S	23	San Diego	1pm
*S	30	at Kansas City	3pm
*O	8	at Denver (Mon.)	7pm
O	14	at New Orleans	12pm
*O	22	Cincinnati (Mon.)	9pm
O	28	at San Francisco	1pm
N	4	Buffalo	1pm
N	11	Open Date	
N	18	Houston	1pm
N	25	Miami	1pm
D	2	LA Rams	1pm
D	9	at Houston	12pm
D	16	Atlanta	1pm
D	23	at Pittsburgh	1pm
D	30	at Cincinnati	1pm

DENVER

*S	9	at LA Raiders	1pm
*S	17	Kansas City (Mon.)	7pm
S	23	Seattle	2pm
S	30	at Buffalo	1pm
*O	8	Cleveland (Mon.)	7pm
O	14	Pittsburgh	2pm
O	21	at Indianapolis	12pm
O	28	Open Date	
*N	4	at Minnesota (Sun. night)	7pm
N	11	at San Diego	1pm
*N	18	Chicago	2pm
*N	22	at Detroit (Thanks.)	12:30pm
*D	2	LA Raiders	2pm
D	9	at Kansas City	3pm
D	16	San Diego	2pm
*D	23	at Seattle (Sun. night)	5pm
D	30	Green Bay	2pm

HOUSTON

S	9	at Atlanta	4pm
*S	16	at Pittsburgh (Sun. night)	8pm
S	23	Indianapolis	12pm
S	30	at San Diego	1pm
O	7	San Francisco	12pm
O	14	at Cincinnati	1pm
O	21	New Orleans	12pm
O	28	NY Jets	12pm
*N	4	at LA Rams	1pm
N	11	Open Date	
N	18	at Cleveland	1pm
*N	26	Buffalo (Mon.)	8pm
D	2	at Seattle	1pm
D	9	Cleveland	12pm
D	16	at Kansas City	12pm
D	23	Cincinnati	12pm
*D	30	Pittsburgh (Sun. night)	7pm

INDIANAPOLIS

S	9	at Buffalo	4pm
S	16	New England	12pm
S	23	at Houston	12pm
S	30	at Philadelphia	1pm
O	7	Kansas City	12pm
O	14	Open Date	
O	21	Denver	12pm
O	28	Miami	1pm
*N	5	NY Giants (Mon.)	9pm
N	11	at New England	1pm
N	18	NY Jets	4pm
N	25	at Cincinnati	1pm
D	2	at Phoenix	2pm
D	9	Buffalo	1pm
D	16	at NY Jets	1pm
*D	22	Washington (Sat. night)	8pm
D	30	at Miami	1pm

KANSAS CITY

S	9	Minnesota	12pm
*S	17	at Denver (Mon.)	7pm
S	23	at Green Bay	12pm
*S	30	Cleveland	3pm
O	7	at Indianapolis	12pm
O	14	Detroit	12pm
O	21	at Seattle	1pm
O	28	Open Date	
N	4	LA Raiders	12pm
N	11	Seattle	12pm
N	18	San Diego	12pm
*N	25	at LA Raiders	1pm
D	2	at New England	1pm
D	9	Denver	3pm
D	16	Houston	12pm
D	23	at San Diego	1pm
*D	29	at Chicago (Sat.)	11:30am

LOS ANGELES RAIDERS

*S	9	Denver	1pm
S	16	at Seattle	1pm
S	23	Pittsburgh	1pm
S	30	Chicago	1pm
*O	7	at Buffalo (Sun. night)	7:30pm
O	14	Seattle	1pm
O	21	at San Diego	1pm
O	28	Open Date	
N	4	at Kansas City	12pm
N	11	Green Bay	1pm
*N	19	at Miami (Mon.)	9pm
*N	25	Kansas City	1pm
*D	2	at Denver	2pm
*D	10	at Detroit (Mon.)	9pm
*D	16	Cincinnati	1pm
*D	22	at Minnesota (Sat.)	3pm
D	30	San Diego	1pm

MIAMI

S	9	at New England	4pm
S	16	Buffalo	1pm
S	23	at NY Giants	1pm
S	30	at Pittsburgh	1pm
O	7	NY Jets	1pm
O	14	Open Date	
*O	18	New England (Thurs. night)	8pm
O	28	at Indianapolis	1pm
N	4	Phoenix	1pm
N	11	at NY Jets	1pm
*N	19	LA Raiders (Mon.)	9pm
N	25	at Cleveland	1pm
D	2	at Washington	1pm
*D	9	Philadelphia (Sun. night)	8pm
D	16	Seattle	1pm
D	23	at Buffalo	1pm
D	30	Indianapolis	1pm

NEW ENGLAND

S	9	Miami	4pm
S	16	at Indianapolis	12pm
S	23	at Cincinnati	1pm
S	30	NY Jets	4pm
O	7	Seattle	1pm
O	14	Open Date	
*O	18	at Miami (Thurs. night)	8pm
O	28	Buffalo	1pm
N	4	at Philadelphia	1pm
N	11	Indianapolis	1pm
N	18	at Buffalo	1pm
N	25	at Phoenix	2pm
D	2	Kansas City	1pm
D	9	at Pittsburgh	1pm
*D	15	Washington (Sat.)	4pm
D	23	at NY Jets	1pm
D	30	NY Giants	1pm

NEW YORK JETS

S	9	at Cincinnati	4pm
S	16	Cleveland	1pm
*S	24	Buffalo (Mon.)	9pm
S	30	at New England	4pm
O	7	at Miami	1pm
O	14	San Diego	1pm
O	21	at Buffalo	1pm
O	28	at Houston	12pm
N	4	Dallas	1pm
N	11	Miami	1pm
N	18	at Indianapolis	4pm
N	25	Pittsburgh	4pm
D	2	at San Diego	1pm
D	9	Open Date	
D	16	Indianapolis	1pm
D	23	New England	1pm
D	30	at Tampa Bay	4pm

PITTSBURGH

S	9	at Cleveland	4pm
*S	16	Houston (Sun. night)	8pm
S	23	at LA Raiders	1pm
S	30	Miami	1pm
O	7	San Diego	1pm
O	14	at Denver	2pm
*O	21	at San Francisco	1pm
*O	29	LA Rams (Mon.)	9pm
N	4	Atlanta	1pm
N	11	Open Date	
*N	18	at Cincinnati (Sun. night)	8pm
N	25	at NY Jets	4pm
D	2	Cincinnati	1pm
D	9	New England	1pm
D	16	at New Orleans	12pm
D	23	Cleveland	1pm
*D	30	at Houston (Sun. night)	7pm

SAN DIEGO

S	9	at Dallas	3pm
S	16	Cincinnati	1pm
S	23	at Cleveland	1pm
S	30	Houston	1pm
O	7	at Pittsburgh	1pm
O	14	at NY Jets	1pm
O	21	LA Raiders	1pm
O	28	Tampa Bay	1pm
N	4	at Seattle	1pm
N	11	Denver	1pm
N	18	at Kansas City	12pm
*N	25	Seattle (Sun. night)	5pm
D	2	NY Jets	1pm
D	9	Open Date	
D	16	at Denver	2pm
D	23	Kansas City	1pm
D	30	at LA Raiders	1pm

SEATTLE

S	9	at Chicago	12pm
S	16	LA Raiders	1pm
S	23	at Denver	2pm
*O	1	Cincinnati (Mon.)	6pm
O	7	at New England	1pm
O	14	at LA Raiders	1pm
O	21	Kansas City	1pm
O	28	Open Date	
N	4	San Diego	1pm
N	11	at Kansas City	12pm
N	18	Minnesota	1pm
*N	25	at San Diego (Sun. night)	5pm
D	2	Houston	1pm
D	9	Green Bay at Milw.	12pm
D	16	at Miami	1pm
*D	23	Denver (Sun. night)	5pm
D	30	Detroit	1pm

Jan. 5, First-round playoffs
Jan. 6, First-round playoffs
Jan. 12, Second-round playoffs
Jan. 13, Second-round playoffs
Jan. 20, Championship game

ATLANTA

S	9	Houston	4pm
S	16	at Detroit	1pm
S	23	at San Francisco	1pm
S	30	Open Date	
O	7	New Orleans	1pm
O	14	San Francisco	1pm
O	21	at LA Rams	1pm
*O	28	Cincinnati (Sun. night)	8pm
N	4	at Pittsburgh	1pm
N	11	at Chicago	12pm
N	18	Philadelphia	1pm
N	25	at New Orleans	12pm
D	2	at Tampa Bay	1pm
D	9	Phoenix	1pm
D	16	at Cleveland	1pm
D	23	LA Rams	1pm
D	30	Dallas	1pm

CHICAGO

S	9	Seattle	12pm
S	16	at Green Bay	12pm
S	23	Minnesota	12pm
S	30	at LA Raiders	1pm
O	7	Green Bay	3pm
*O	14	LA Rams (Sun. night)	6:30pm
O	21	Open Date	
O	28	at Phoenix	2pm
N	4	at Tampa Bay	4pm
N	11	Atlanta	12pm
*N	18	at Denver	2pm
N	25	at Minnesota	12pm
D	2	Detroit	12pm
D	9	at Washington	4pm
*D	16	at Detroit (Sun. night)	8pm
D	23	Tampa Bay	12pm
*D	29	Kansas City (Sat.)	11:30am

DALLAS

S	9	San Diego	3pm
S	16	NY Giants	3pm
S	23	at Washington	1pm
S	30	at NY Giants	1pm
O	7	Tampa Bay	12pm
O	14	at Phoenix	1pm
O	21	at Tampa Bay	1pm
O	28	Philadelphia	12pm
N	4	at NY Jets	1pm
*N	11	San Francisco (Sun. night)	7pm
N	18	at LA Rams	1pm
*N	22	Washington (Thanks.)	3pm
D	2	New Orleans	3pm
D	9	Open Date	
D	16	Phoenix	12pm
D	23	at Philadelphia	1pm
D	30	at Atlanta	1pm

DETROIT

S	9	Tampa Bay	1pm
S	16	Atlanta	1pm
*S	23	at Tampa Bay (Sun. night)	8pm
S	30	Green Bay	1pm
O	7	at Minnesota	12pm
O	14	at Kansas City	12pm
O	21	Open Date	
O	28	at New Orleans	12pm
N	4	Washington	1pm
N	11	Minnesota	1pm
N	18	at NY Giants	1pm
*N	22	Denver (Thanks.)	12:30pm
D	2	at Chicago	12pm
*D	10	LA Raiders (Mon.)	9pm
*D	16	Chicago (Sun. night)	8pm
*D	22	at Green Bay (Sat.)	11:30am
D	30	at Seattle	1pm

GREEN BAY

S	9	LA Rams	12pm
S	16	Chicago	12pm
S	23	Kansas City	12pm
S	30	at Detroit	1pm
O	7	at Chicago	3pm
O	14	at Tampa Bay	1pm
O	21	Open Date	
O	28	Minnesota at Milw.	12pm
N	4	San Francisco	12pm
N	11	at LA Raiders	1pm
N	18	at Phoenix	2pm
N	25	Tampa Bay at Milw.	12pm
*D	2	at Minnesota (Sun. night)	7pm
D	9	Seattle at Milw.	12pm
D	16	at Philadelphia	4pm
*D	22	Detroit (Sat.)	11:30am
*D	30	at Denver	2pm

LOS ANGELES RAMS

S	9	at Green Bay	12pm
S	16	at Tampa Bay	1pm
*S	23	Philadelphia	1pm
S	30	Open Date	
*O	7	Cincinnati	1pm
*O	14	at Chicago (Sun. night)	6:30pm
O	21	Atlanta	1pm
*O	29	at Pittsburgh (Mon.)	9pm
*N	4	Houston	1pm
*N	11	NY Giants	1pm
N	18	Dallas	1pm
N	25	at San Francisco	1pm
D	2	at Cleveland	1pm
*D	9	New Orleans	1pm
*D	17	San Francisco (Mon.)	6pm
D	23	at Atlanta	1pm
*D	31	at New Orleans (Mon.)	7pm

MINNESOTA

S	9	at Kansas City	12pm
S	16	New Orleans	3pm
S	23	at Chicago	12pm
S	30	Tampa Bay	12pm
O	7	Detroit	12pm
*O	15	at Philadelphia (Mon.)	9pm
O	21	Open Date	
O	28	Green Bay at Milw.	12pm
*N	4	Denver (Sun. night)	7pm
N	11	at Detroit	1pm
N	18	at Seattle	1pm
N	25	Chicago	12pm
*D	2	Green Bay (Sun. night)	7pm
D	9	at NY Giants	1pm
D	16	at Tampa Bay	1pm
*D	22	LA Raiders (Sat.)	3pm
D	30	San Francisco	12pm

NEW ORLEANS

*S	10	San Francisco (Mon.)	8pm
S	16	at Minnesota	3pm
S	23	Phoenix	12pm
S	30	Open Date	
O	7	at Atlanta	1pm
O	14	Cleveland	12pm
O	21	at Houston	12pm
O	28	Detroit	12pm
N	4	at Cincinnati	1pm
N	11	Tampa Bay	12pm
N	18	at Washington	1pm
N	25	Atlanta	12pm
D	2	at Dallas	3pm
*D	9	at LA Rams	1pm
D	16	Pittsburgh	12pm
*D	23	at San Francisco	1pm
*D	31	LA Rams (Mon.)	7pm

NEW YORK GIANTS

*S	9	Philadelphia (Sun. night)	8pm
S	16	at Dallas	3pm
S	23	Miami	1pm
S	30	Dallas	1pm
O	7	Open Date	
*O	14	at Washington	4pm
O	21	Phoenix	4pm
*O	28	Washington	4pm
*N	5	at Indianapolis (Mon.)	9pm
*N	11	at LA Rams	1pm
N	18	Detroit	1pm
N	25	at Philadelphia	1pm
*D	3	at San Francisco (Mon.)	6pm
D	9	Minnesota	1pm
*D	15	Buffalo (Sat.)	12:30pm
D	23	at Phoenix	2pm
D	30	at New England	1pm

PHILADELPHIA

*S	9	at NY Giants (Sun. night)	8pm
S	16	Phoenix	1pm
*S	23	at LA Rams	1pm
S	30	Indianapolis	1pm
O	7	Open Date	
*O	15	Minnesota (Mon.)	9pm
O	21	at Washington	1pm
O	28	at Dallas	12pm
N	4	New England	1pm
*N	12	Washington (Mon.)	9pm
N	18	at Atlanta	1pm
N	25	NY Giants	1pm
D	2	at Buffalo	1pm
*D	9	at Miami (Sun. night)	8pm
D	16	Green Bay	4pm
D	23	Dallas	1pm
*D	29	at Phoenix (Sat.)	2pm

PHOENIX

S	9	at Washington	1pm
S	16	at Philadelphia	1pm
S	23	at New Orleans	12pm
*S	30	Washington (Sun. night)	5pm
O	7	Open Date	
O	14	Dallas	1pm
O	21	at NY Giants	4pm
O	28	Chicago	2pm
N	4	at Miami	1pm
N	11	at Buffalo	1pm
N	18	Green Bay	2pm
N	25	New England	2pm
D	2	Indianapolis	2pm
D	9	at Atlanta	1pm
D	16	at Dallas	12pm
D	23	NY Giants	2pm
*D	29	Philadelphia (Sat.)	2pm

SAN FRANCISCO

*S	10	at New Orleans (Mon.)	8pm
*S	16	Washington	1pm
*S	23	Atlanta	1pm
S	30	Open Date	
O	7	at Houston	12pm
O	14	at Atlanta	1pm
*O	21	Pittsburgh	1pm
O	28	Cleveland	1pm
N	4	at Green Bay	12pm
*N	11	at Dallas (Sun. night)	7pm
N	18	Tampa Bay	1pm
N	25	LA Rams	1pm
*D	3	NY Giants (Mon.)	6pm
D	9	at Cincinnati	1pm
*D	17	at LA Rams (Mon.)	6pm
*D	23	New Orleans	12pm
D	30	at Minnesota	12pm

TAMPA BAY

S	9	at Detroit	1pm
S	16	LA Rams	1pm
*S	23	Detroit (Sun. night)	8pm
S	30	at Minnesota	12pm
O	7	at Dallas	12pm
O	14	Green Bay	1pm
O	21	Dallas	1pm
O	28	at San Diego	1pm
N	4	Chicago	4pm
N	11	at New Orleans	12pm
N	18	at San Francisco	1pm
N	25	Green Bay at Milw.	12pm
D	2	Atlanta	1pm
D	9	Open Date	
D	16	Minnesota	1pm
D	23	at Chicago	12pm
D	30	NY Jets	4pm

WASHINGTON

S	9	Phoenix	1pm
*S	16	at San Francisco	1pm
S	23	Dallas	1pm
*S	30	at Phoenix (Sun. night)	5pm
O	7	Open Date	
*O	14	NY Giants	4pm
O	21	Philadelphia	1pm
*O	28	at NY Giants	4pm
N	4	at Detroit	1pm
*N	12	at Philadelphia (Mon.)	9pm
N	18	New Orleans	1pm
*N	22	at Dallas (Thanks.)	3pm
D	2	Miami	1pm
D	9	Chicago	4pm
*D	15	at New England	4pm
*D	22	at Indianapolis (Sat. night)	8pm
D	30	Buffalo	1pm

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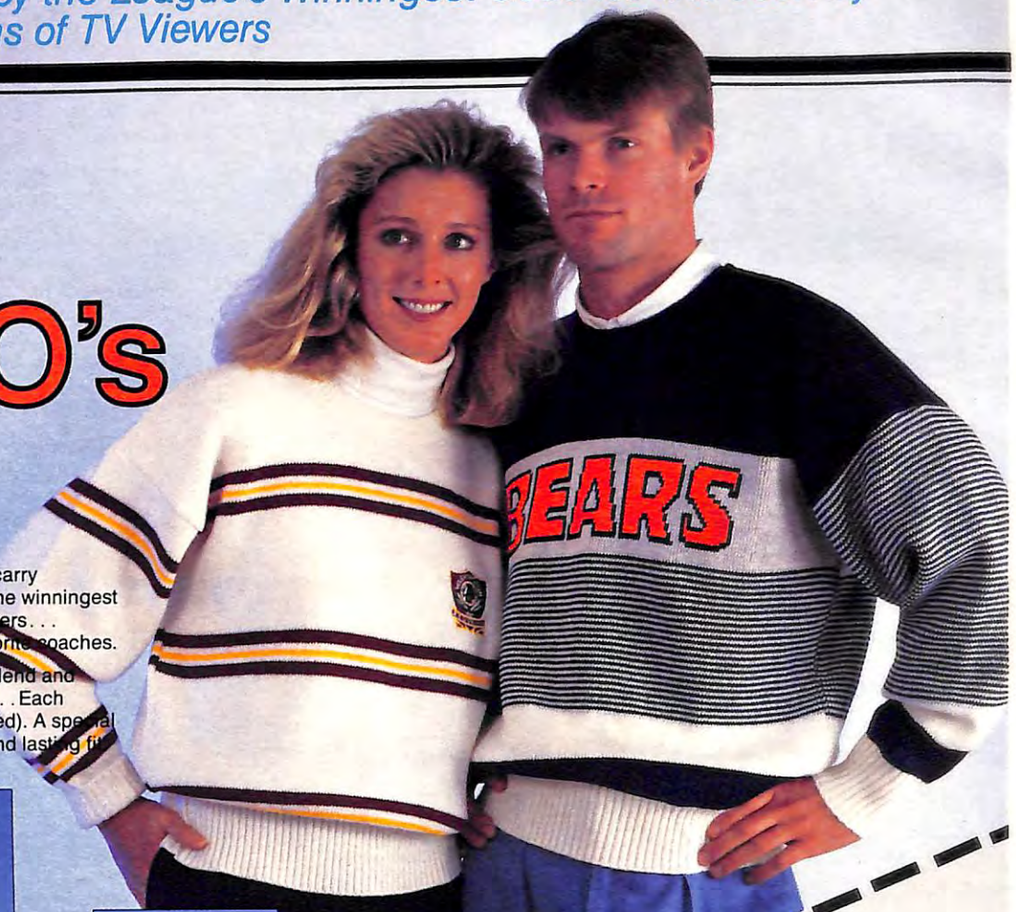

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6	BEARS	20	BROWNS
7	LIONS	21	STEELERS
8	PACKERS	22	BRONCOS
9	VIKINGS	23	CHIEFS
10	FALCONS	24	RAMS
11	RAIDERS	25	CHARGERS
12	SEAHAWKS	26	BUCS
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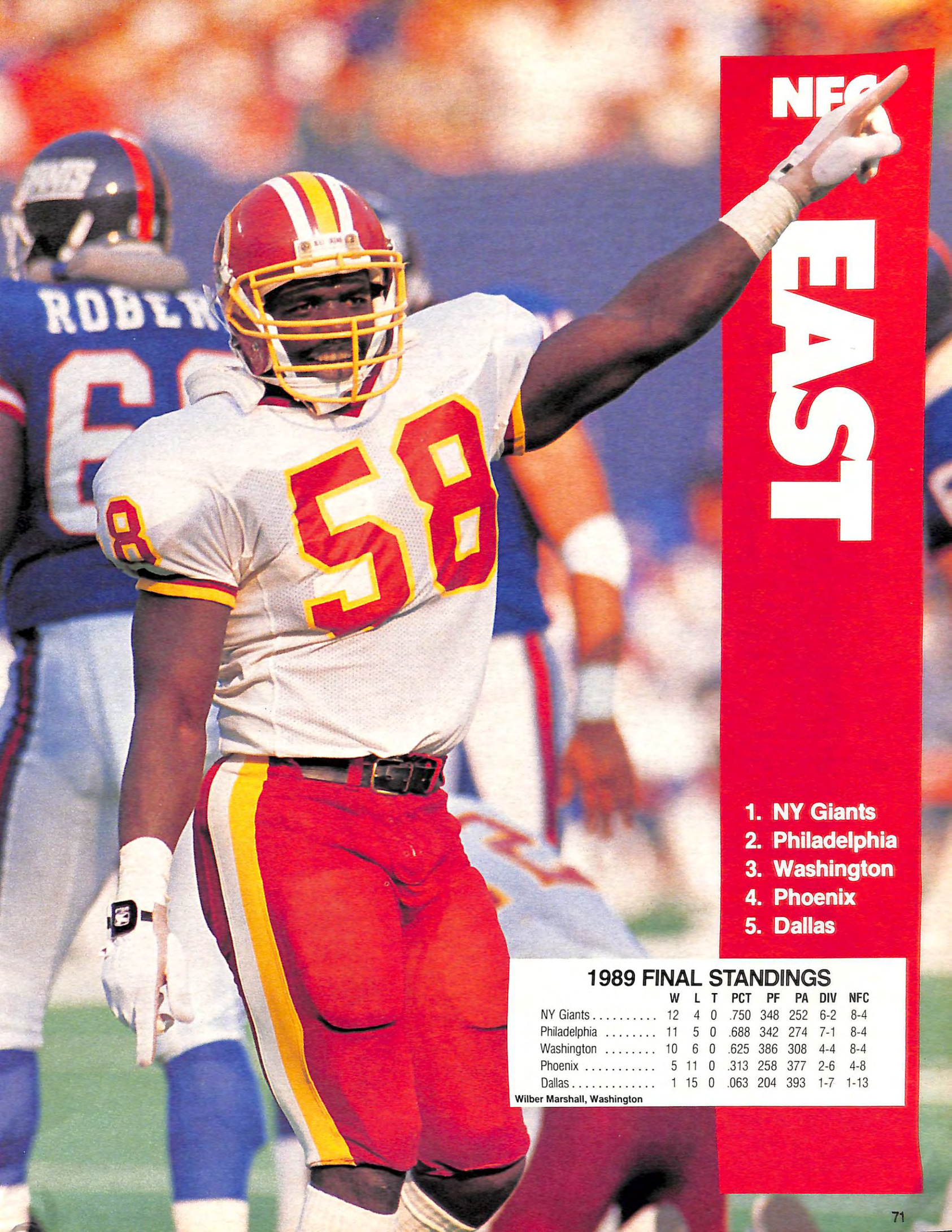

NFC EAST

1. NY Giants
2. Philadelphia
3. Washington
4. Phoenix
5. Dallas

1989 FINAL STANDINGS

	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA	DIV	NFC
NY Giants	12	4	0	.750	348	252	6-2	8-4
Philadelphia	11	5	0	.688	342	274	7-1	8-4
Washington	10	6	0	.625	386	308	4-4	8-4
Phoenix	5	11	0	.313	258	377	2-6	4-8
Dallas	1	15	0	.063	204	393	1-7	1-13

Wilber Marshall, Washington

NEW YORK GIANTS

1989 RECORD: 12-4 HEAD COACH: BILL PARCELLS STADIUM: GIANTS (77,152)

After a two-year hiatus from postseason play, the New York Giants won the NFC East with a 12-4 record, second only to world champion San Francisco. It was New York's third-best mark in 18 years as its linebacker-rich defense topped the NFC in fewest points allowed.

And yet an eerie, silent changing of the guard continued. Well before the devastating overtime playoff loss to the Los Angeles Rams, wear and tear was apparent with quarterback Phil Simms, as well as 1,000-yard rusher Ottis Anderson, who wasn't even protected in the offseason under Plan B. Several headhunters from the Giants' Super Bowl XXI juggernaut disappeared, and most of the Suburbanites — the veteran offensive line — are now battling crabgrass rather than defensive linemen.

It's the young offensive linemen, on whom the Giants spent most of their high draft picks the last few years, who will dictate if New York's show-stopping performances are to carry over. Should those youthful behemoths falter, Giants fans will witness an early curtain call from Super Bowl contention.

WIDE RECEIVERS/ TIGHT END

A run-oriented attack contributed to the club's 25th ranking in total receptions. There's ample quality and big-play material in this group, yet precious little durability and consistency.

Odessa Turner's 38 catches were the lowest in the league among individual team leaders. For being the club's most productive receiver, his 12.3-yard average and four touchdowns were as paltry. Turner is a big (6-3, 205) target and has the speed you like in a wideout, but his poor work ethic and unreliability keep coaches from exploiting his talent. He's also injury-prone (he missed the final four games) and runs erratic patterns. Somewhat of a long strider, he still comes out of his breaks fairly well, has good hands and will occasionally make the tough catch.

The other starting wideout, Lionel Manuel (33 catches, 539 yards, 1 touchdown), is a six-year vet with more quickness than outright speed. He has great feet, makes crisp cuts, knows how to get open and is dangerous after the catch. He's also fearless, despite lacking size (5-11, 180).

Stephen Baker, frail appearing at 5-8, 160, lived up to his "Touchdown Maker" nickname just twice last year. He is best on out and comeback routes and occasionally makes a big play with a 360-degree spin move. While Baker sometimes telegraphs his routes, he is lightning in cleats. The Giants still are waiting for 1987 first-round pick Mark Ingram to blossom. He has the tools, hands and moves, but injuries have slowed his progress. Of his 32 catches in three seasons, 17 (17.1 avg., 1 TD) came in '89.

New York's robo-tight end, Mark Bavaro, blew out his knee circuitry in the seventh week and missed the final nine regular season games. He still managed 22 receptions. "Rambo" (6-4, 245) delivers textbook seal blocks, and doesn't hesitate mixing it up with linebackers and defensive ends. As a receiver, Bavaro uses drive, arm strength and balance to run through jamming linebackers. He has sure hands, does a great job of reading coverages in optional routes and is the Giants' go-to guy. After the catch, he's a no-nonsense, north-south giant redwood who manages to always fall, or stumble, forward.

Backing up Bavaro are two blockers. Second-year tight end Howard Cross' speed and hands remain suspect, while Plan B pickup Bob Mrosko started 12 games at Houston.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.0**

OFFENSIVE LINE

Devoting their top two picks in each of the last two drafts to offensive linemen, New York has embarked upon an oft-excruciating rebuilding process. The offensive growing pains were evident in 1989: 20th in total yards, 27th in average running gain and 23rd in sacks allowed per pass attempt. At the same time, the Giants led the league by converting 17 of their 22 fourth-down plays. Most came on short-yardage rushes, providing a glimpse of the developing talent at this position.

The Suburbanites — the Super Bowl offensive line — are mostly a distant, pleasant memory. Only overachieving center Bart Oates remains, and he's in danger of being replaced by Brian Williams, 1989's top pick. Oates doesn't have great strength but his BYU passing-game background, guile and fairly quick feet have served him well. His in-line decisions are impeccable, and he fires out well. At 265, he can be bulled on the pass rush. Despite entering just his sixth NFL year, the former USFLer will turn 32 this season.

Williams (6-5, 300) developed quickly last season and could take over anytime. With his tremendous physical ability, he's capable of handling nose tackles by himself. He has better-than-average feet and brings a competitive zeal that should make for a long, productive career.

Thus far, the most productive of GM George Young's recent high picks has been right guard Eric Moore. Like Williams, Moore has good explosion off the ball and is a massive (6-5, 290) force. Overall, he was an improved drive blocker in his second NFL season; on the goal line, the Giants just aimed for his number 60. He can play tackle, too, though he's probably more effective pass blocking from the guard spot. He has great feet but will occasionally lose leverage and get beat inside.

Right tackle Doug Riesenberg is a bit plodding and mechanical but manages to stick with his blocks, thanks largely to great intensity and work ethic. He has a nice low base setting up in pass protection, and relies on techniques against speed rushers, where he often struggles. For a strongside tackle, he's a below-average run blocker who tries to set up his man.

On the left side, tackle John "Jumbo" Elliott, a No. 2 pick in '88, has improved his footwork and did better against some of the top pass rushers. He still plays a bit high and will overextend to take away an upfield pass rush. He has the strength to usually get away with it, but often will get too far back on his heels and leave open the inside shortcut to the quarterback. When he squares up on run blocking, Elliott is a 6-7, 305-pound steamroller. His All-Pro schedule coincides with his continued improvement in pass-blocking skills.

William Roberts, more secure at left guard than he was at tackle, adjusts well on the move, makes good decisions on stunts and blitzes and has the muscle to control one-on-one. He is the most athletic of this group and is at his best uncovered versus 3-4 defenses, where he's free to slide in the pocket. Squatty (6-3, 288) Bob Kratch lacks the height for tackle and is a more natural guard, but he can play either. The club's second player chosen in the '89 draft, Kratch needs to play lower but is an excellent prospect with good mobility.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.0**

QUARTERBACK

The club's unquestioned leader, Phil Simms, is entering his 12th season and won't be leading this team long into the decade. No one doubts his rawhide toughness. Yet over the past two seasons, he's been battered around as much as any starting quarterback, suffering 93 sacks or one every 9½ pass attempts. Part of the problem is that Simms moves as deftly as the Chrysler Building. Part is operating behind an offensive line in transition. Part is not knowing when to give up on a play. He also has lost four straight to arch-rival Philadelphia, and coach Bill Parcells is wondering if he needs a quarterback who can elude the NFL's better pass rushes.

Despite average arm strength, Simms has a good touch on the long ball, and hits the deep seam as well as anyone. His forte is the short stuff. He fits the Giants' ball-control passing game well, completing a respectable 56.3 percent last season. His TD throws fell to a six-year low of 14, which he matched in interceptions.

Jeff Hostetler, the presumed heir apparent, has better escapability and throws well on the run. The six-year pro has a more powerful arm than Simms, zips the intermediate routes and has overcome problems of happy feet in the pocket. He's big enough and tough enough, but his inaccuracy is enough to drive a coach into hiding. Given his limited action (20 of 39 last season, 80.6 rating), Hos-

Carl Banks

tetler's ability to consistently read defenses also is awaiting approval. **GRADE** (max. 10): **7.0**

RUNNING BACKS Except for rookie dynamo Dave Meggett, the Giants backfield is a graying, pedestrian bunch that couldn't run outside if the house was on fire. Ottis Anderson may have been the league's '89 *comeback* player, but just how far is he *going* after 11 seasons? His 1,023 rushing yards last season loses some luster when you consider the 3.1 average. Anderson no longer has that great burst out of his stance, the outside explosiveness, superior running base or the open-field moves. Today's Anderson is more bull than breakaway, more in-line than out-of-sight. As a pass catcher, he has good hands (28 catches), but with his 32-year-old legs is strictly ball-control these days.

Meggett, the saving grace of last year's offense, had 1,807 all-purpose yards and was the team's only big-play threat (he had the longest reception, punt return and kickoff return). He has versatility, quick feet, great wiggle and body control, even on hard, frozen surfaces. Getting him the ball in the open field, on screens or isolated against a linebacker paid big dividends, as evidenced by his 34 catches, 531 yards (15.6) and four receiving TDs (three going for over 50 yards). Used most often on third downs, Meggett's acceleration after the catch outmatches most defenders. His size (5-7, 180) suggests some frailty, but he was amazingly durable. The fifth-round nugget out of Towson State did have a problem with the f-word, *fumbling* eight times in '89, but surprised Parcells late in the season with his blitz blocking in third-down nickel situations.

Another diminutive Giants running back, former Pro Bowler Joe Morris (5-7, 195), is trying to come back at age 29 from a broken foot. Unprotected under Plan B, Morris tested the free-agent waters only to discover that the "B" in Plan B doesn't always stand for Big Bucks. If Morris can't win his old job back, the "B" will stand for Backup. Before the foot injury, Morris hit holes like a low line drive, burrowing his way past tacklers. Nearly devoid of pass-receiving and blocking skills, Morris is a one-dimensional talent who doesn't have a step to spare.

Fullback Maurice Carthon is a lineman in the backfield. The consummate lead blocker, his seal block was Morris' meal ticket and the key to Anderson's 1,000-yard season. Hard-working Lewis Tillman may win a starting job if Anderson and Morris falter. A one-gear line-blaster, he has a good power/speed package but no idea what it means to set up a block. He has no changeup in his gait and doesn't cut back well. **GRADE** (max. 10): **5.5**

DEFENSIVE LINE These 3-4 trench fighters long have been charged with stripping interference so the Giants' linebackers can be heroes and go to the Pro Bowl. That's still the scheme, but the current group lacks the cohesiveness of past units.

Nose tackle Erik Howard is hardly the two-gap, middle technician of a Jim Burt. Howard is a bull rusher (5½ sacks) with a slicing move, yet he charges high and often loses leverage and gets ridden out of the play. Although he's the team's strongest guy and a weight-room fanatic, his run defense is ordinary. He's also susceptible to traps and influence blocks.

Left defensive end Eric Dorsey's broken foot in the second week kept him out of action until the playoff. Dorsey (6-5, 280) doesn't play as strong as he looks. He'll disappear for a time, then flash on one play. With his straight-ahead speed and strength, Dorsey should be a good pass rusher but lacks fluid moves or consistent feet. His best move is sticking a paw into the air and swatting away passes. He's also tremendous in pursuit.

Lined up on the right side with Lawrence Taylor, Leonard Marshall had his best year since the 1986 Super Bowl season with 9½ sacks. His basic bull-rush menu features an effective spin move. Going into his eighth season, he is active, a solid tackler and plays the point of attack extremely well — he can knock an offensive tackle off the ball.

John Washington filled in for Dorsey last year and was just so-so. Washington is a stay-at-home type, much better holding his ground than hunting down ballcarriers.
GRADE (max. 10): **6.0**

LINEBACKERS Featuring three of the team's top five tacklers (Carl Banks 97, Gary Reasons 85, Lawrence Taylor 83), the leading sacker (Taylor 15) and top two fumble forcers (Banks 7, Taylor 3), the linebackers were once again the backbone of the Giants.

After nine years and nine straight Pro Bowls, Taylor has made some changes in his game: He keeps his head on a swivel more, disdains cut blocks and drops into coverage better. The book says Taylor can be handled — those well-documented skinny legs don't deliver that much drive — but it takes a tackle with extraordinary footwork and/or a back with great upper-body strength to have any measurable success. Fact is, Taylor is the quintessential impact player. A devastating blindside rusher, he routinely unleashes his trademark tomahawk hammering of the ball on quarterbacks and ballcarriers. Still a gamer, he played with a broken, non-weight-bearing foot bone over the last five games, including playoffs. Unfortunately, this all-time great is one NFL drug policy mistake away from a ban that could end his career.

On the strong side, Banks rebounded from a woeful '88 and probably should have made the Pro Bowl. He is quite simply a very solid player who excels at everything except the pass rush. He has terrific lateral movement, takes great angles and uses his octopus-like arms to be one of the league's surest tacklers. Banks gets a good chuck on tight ends and running backs looping out of the backfield, and has the speed to chase in the short zones.

Vintage Harry Carson he's not, but the Giants aren't complaining about the year turned in by inside 'backer Gary Reasons. A tall (6-4), rangy type, Reasons anticipates well and calls the defensive signals. He's made himself into a better tackler but lacks the speed and athletic ability to get to the sidelines or be much help in pass coverage. In New York's system, the inside LBs rarely blitz.

Pepper Johnson is as inconsistent as he is rah-rah enthusiastic. That combination will put gray hair on a coach quickly. At 248 pounds, he's a stay-at-home plugger with a mean streak. When it comes to defending the pass, he's strictly straight-ahead. Putting him in reverse is a waste of time. Johnie Cooks, a 31-year-old with his best days behind him, can play both inside and outside. Versatility is his strongest suit. **GRADE** (max. 10): **8.5**

DEFENSIVE BACKS If cornerback Mark Collins and strong safety Myron Guyton continue to improve and free safety Greg Jackson spends some time with his playbook, this secondary could move up quickly. Guyton, an eighth-rounder last year, was perfect for a unit utilizing a basic two-deep zone that requires good tackling across the board. Guyton came out of nowhere to lead the Giants in tackles with 99 after winning the starting job in Week 2. At 6-1, 205, he's a quick learner with range. His biggest problem is recognition in coverage, like picking up the zone pass-along from the corner. It cost the Giants some big plays in '89, but overall his rookie mistakes were relatively few.

Jackson, touted much more highly than Guyton, lost the strong safety job in the opener after biting on a play-action fake. This year, he'll chew on the free safety position. A good athlete (4.55 speed at 200 pounds) with a terrific nose for the ball, the former LSU star likes to "deke" the QB and receiver, draw the throw, then use his exceptional recovery speed to close on the ball. That may have worked against Vanderbilt, but in the NFL it's a quick way out of town. Nevertheless, he showed fine centerfielder instincts as a rookie.

The best pass defender was left corner Collins, a jersey-to-jersey cover guy who smothers wideouts. Although the Giants are basically a zone team, Collins has great speed (4.45), body control, quick reactions and the confidence to go out on the island. He also chipped in 84 tackles, fourth on the team.

Perry Williams, on the right corner, may be replaced by Sheldon White. Williams, a college track star, is a layoff type with great recovery speed but gives up too much short stuff. White plays with less cushion and has a smoother backpedal and quicker hip turn. Although he's a better stride-for-stride cover man, he's more oops than oomph on run support. **GRADE** (max. 10): **5.5**

SPECIAL TEAMS With Dave Meggett on returns and defensive back Reyna Thompson on coverage, Giants teams improved dramatically. Meggett scored on a 76-yard punt return and posted a 12.7 average (third in the NFL); on kickoffs, he was slightly less spectacular at 21.4 (11th). New York coverage teams finished second (kickoffs) and third (punts) in the NFC, with Thompson usually the first on the scene with 20 solo stops.

Raul Allegre continued to suffer nagging injuries. When healthy, Allegre is a money kicker who can nail the long field goals in clutch time. Before getting hurt, he was 20 for 26 (76.9 percent). Punter Sean Landeta returned to Pro Bowl form, leading the league in net average (37.8) and tying for third in gross (43.1). He was also a decent pooch punter, placing 19 inside the 20-yard line.
GRADE (max. 10): **8.5**

COACHING/ ORGANIZATION Although he wasn't named as such, Bill Parcells did a coach-of-the-year job in '89. Faced with injuries to Joe Morris and Mark Bavaro and a shaky offensive line in the powerful NFC East, Parcells coaxed his team to the division crown and came within one controversial interference call of the NFC title contest.

General manager George Young has done a truly great drafting job (Meggett, Elliott, Moore, Williams, Kratch, Guyton) and has kept this team on a winning track through a major transition in talent. After going 3 (signed) and 10 (lost) in this year's Plan B, the Giants are lacking depth in several positions. That could become crucial if the team again gets hit hard with injuries.
GRADE (max. 10): **8.0**

DRAFT Hampton may not be a franchise back, but he should be a very good one. At 6-0, 215, he's a 4.55 runner who can take it between the tackles and catch balls out of the backfield. The Giants selected five defensive linemen; two of them, Fox and Mark, should contribute soon. Fox provides a good inside push and is the better run stopper. Mark has relatively advanced skills and could break in as a pass-rush specialist.
GRADE (max. 10): **5.0**

1990 DRAFT round number (pick in round; overall sequence): 1. (26,24) RODNEY HAMPTON, RB, Georgia; 2. (26,51) MIKE FOX, DT, West Virginia; 3. (26,79) GREG MARK, DE, Miami; 4. (26,107) DAVID WHITMORE, DB, Stephen F. Austin; 5. (26,135) CRAIG KUPP, QB, Pacific Lutheran; 7. (26,191) AARON EMANUEL, RB, Southern California; 8. (26,218) BARRY VOORHEES, OT, Cal State-Northridge; 9. (26,246) CLINT JAMES, DE, Louisiana State; 10. (26,274)OTIS MOORE, DT, Clemson; 11. (26,302) TIM DOWNING, DE, Washington State; 12. 26,329) MATT STOVER, K, Louisiana Tech.

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VETERANS ROSTER

NO.	NAME	POS.	HT.	WT.	BIRTH-DATE	COLLEGE	NFL EXP.
2	Allegre, R.	K	5-10	167	6/15/59	Texas	8
24	Anderson, O.	RB	6-2	225	11/19/57	Miami (Fla.)	12
85	Baker, S.	WR	5-8	160	8/30/64	Fresno State	4
58	Banks, C.	LB	6-4	235	8/29/62	Michigan State	8
89	Bavaro, M.	TE	6-4	245	4/28/63	Notre Dame	6
44	Carthon, M.	RB	6-1	225	4/24/61	Arkansas State	6
25	Collins, M.	CB	5-10	190	1/16/64	Cal St. Fullerton	5
98	Cooks, J.	LB	6-4	251	11/23/58	Mississippi State	9
87	Cross, H.	TE	6-5	245	8/8/67	Alabama	1
99	DeOssie, S.	LB	6-2	248	11/22/62	Boston College	7
77	Dorsey, E.	DE	6-5	280	8/5/64	Notre Dame	5
76	Elliott, J.	T	6-7	305	4/1/65	Michigan	3
	*Feggins, H.	CB	5-10	190	5/6/65	N.C.-Charlotte	3
29	Guyton, M	DB	6-1	205	8/26/67	Eastern Kentucky	1
15	Hostetler, J.	QB	6-3	212	4/22/61	West Virginia	7
74	Howard, E.	NT	6-4	268	11/12/64	Washington State	5
82	Ingram, M.	WR	5-10	188	8/23/65	Michigan State	4
47	Jackson, G.	S	6-1	200	8/20/66	LSU	1
54	Jiles, D.	LB	6-4	245	11/23/61	Texas Tech	6
52	Johnson, P.	LB	6-3	248	6/29/64	Ohio State	5
61	Kratch, B.	G	6-3	288	1/6/66	Iowa	1
5	Landeta, S.	P	6-0	200	1/6/62	Towson State	6
86	Manuel, L.	WR	5-11	180	4/13/62	Pacific	7
70	Marshall, L.	DE	6-3	285	10/22/61	LSU	8
30	Meggett, D.	RB	5-7	180	4/3/66	Towson State	1
60	Moore, E.	T	6-5	290	1/21/65	Indiana	3
20	Morris, J.	RB	5-7	195	9/15/60	Syracuse	9
	*Mrosko, B.	TE	6-5	270	11/13/65	Penn State	3
65	Oates, B.	C	6-3	265	12/16/58	Brigham Young	6
55	Reasons, G.	LB	6-4	234	2/18/62	Northwestern St. (La.)	7
72	Riesenberg, D.	T	6-5	275	7/22/65	California	4
66	Roberts, W.	T	6-5	280	8/5/62	Ohio State	6
81	Robinson, S.	WR	5-11	186	2/19/62	North Dakota St.	6
22	Rouson, L.	RB	6-1	222	10/18/62	Colorado	6
11	Simms, P.	QB	6-3	214	11/3/56	Morehead State	12
56	Taylor, L.	LB	6-3	243	2/4/59	North Carolina	10
21	Thompson, R.	CB	6-0	193	8/28/63	Baylor	5
	*Thornton, R.	LB	6-4	240	12/23/64	Houston	1
34	Tillman, L.	RB	6-0	195	4/16/66	Jackson State	1
83	Turner, O.	WR	6-3	205	10/12/64	Northwestern St. (La.)	4
73	Washington, J.	DE	6-4	275	2/20/63	Oklahoma State	5
36	White, A.	S	6-0	200	4/6/64	Florida	4
39	White, S.	DB	5-11	188	3/1/65	Miami (Ohio)	3
59	Williams, B.	C-G	6-5	300	6/8/66	Minnesota	1
23	Williams, P.	CB	6-2	203	5/12/61	N.C. State	7

*Plan B free agent

PHILADELPHIA EAGLES

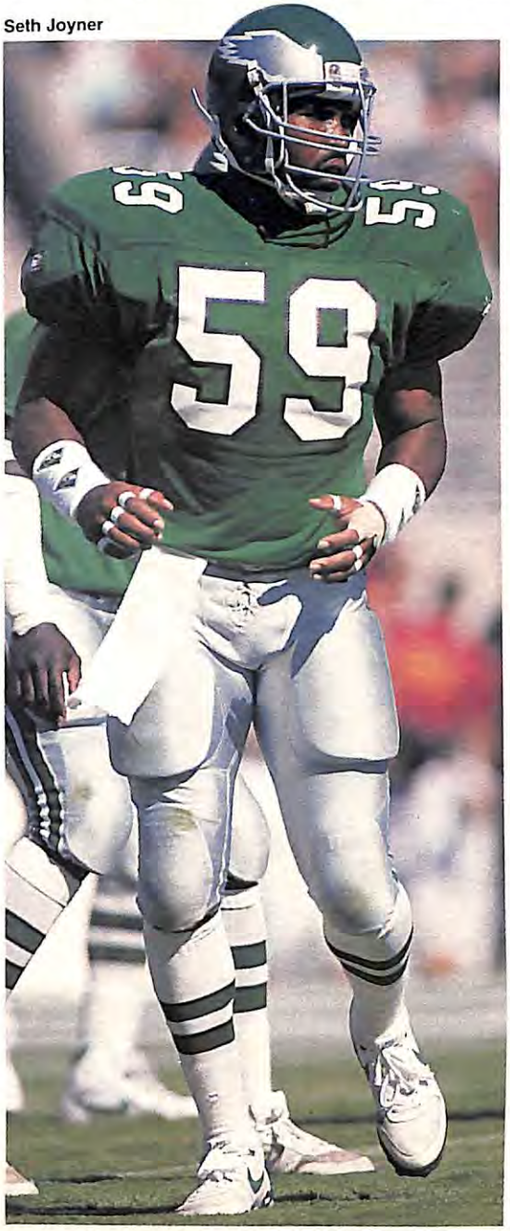
1989 RECORD: 11-5 HEAD COACH: BUDDY RYAN STADIUM: VETERANS (65,356)

Despite being eliminated from the '88 playoffs by the Bears in Chicago's "Fog Bowl," the Eagles were as exuberant as possible in defeat. They felt they had outplayed Chicago and couldn't wait for the 1989 campaign. Indeed, they improved a game to 11-5, and were in Super Bowl contention.

But after being whipped 21-7 by the Rams in last year's NFC wild card game, the Eagles were reeling, bewildered and left wondering if they hadn't regressed. Offensively, they were inept, their lack of deep speed glaring and quarterback Randall Cunningham's seemingly magical touch all but invisible.

Philadelphia owner Norman Braman smoldered, and when the smoke cleared, offensive coordinator Ted Plumb — now wide receivers coach in Phoenix — took the fall. Buddy Ryan replaced Plumb with former Jets offensive coordinator Rich Kotite and vowed, with five-time Pro Bowler Mike Quick's health still in question, to bring in droves of new wide receivers. This season rides on whether Quick fixes can repair the club's damaging self-doubts.

Seth Joyner



WIDE RECEIVERS/ TIGHT END Surgical success to relieve tendinitis in Mike Quick's knees will determine if the Eagles have a deep threat, or are just in deep trouble. Quick, 31, has missed 18 games in two seasons, and can't hit that sixth gear that leaves defenders behind unless he's at least 90 percent healthy. His height (6-2), long-striding speed and fluid moves make him an ideal target. Quick has averaged a touchdown every six receptions. When he missed the last 10 games in '89, the Eagles' yards-per-reception dropped to 11.75, nearly 3 yards less than their opponents and 25th in the NFL.

With Quick's big-play dimension sidelined, Cris Carter's effectiveness waned. He caught only six more passes (45) than the year before, and didn't materialize as the premier receiver the Eagles had hoped for. Another athletic big target, Carter used his height (6-3), leaping ability and body control for 11 TDs, including some spectacular end zone "alley oop" catches. However, he doesn't have Quick's speed, doesn't run inside routes that well, and therefore, gets overplayed to the outside. He's not a home run threat, and is often a non-factor farther out than the opponents' 20. Still, with good acceleration out of his cuts, quick feet and good concentration, he's developed into a productive possession guy (13.4 average in '89) who has better-than-average running ability after the catch. Gregg Garrity, absent for half the season because of shoulder ailments, is a possession receiver specializing in precise routes. His best move may be surviving Ryan's "open house" training camp.

Tight end Keith Jackson further established himself as the best in the business, overcoming knee, ankle and back problems en route to his second straight Pro Bowl. He led NFL tight ends with 63 receptions and 648 yards, and has the physical ability to stay ahead of the pack. At 6-2, 250, he has tremendous hands, great confidence and is not intimidated. Although the Eagles don't use him much in outside running schemes, he is a solid blocker. Jackson's presence in three- and four-receiver sets is testimony to his athleticism and ability.

Venerable backup Jimmie Giles' 13-year career ended (released) with the addition of Plan B journeymen Greg Werner (Jets) and Harper Le Bel (Seahawks). Werner has adequate speed and good hands while LeBel, a converted interior lineman, doubles as a punt snapper.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.5**

OFFENSIVE LINE The Philadelphia front, for two seasons a veritable five-person danger sign for any quarterback, improved considerably last season — all the way to "adequate." Considering Cunningham's self-sacks from too frequently fleeing the pocket, the club's 2.8 sacks a game wasn't bad. Philadelphia also climbed from 17th to fifth in NFL rushing rankings.

If right guard Ron Solt recaptures his Pro Bowl form, he has the talent to solidify this young, developing line. Last season he missed training camp rehabbing his knees, and then was hit with a month-long suspension after testing positive for steroids. When he did get into the lineup, he lacked the legendary strength, drive and explosiveness that routinely buckled opposing linemen. Solt has prototype size (6-3, 288), is an excellent technician and has the balance and awareness to keep rushers off the meal ticket.

Flanking Solt are right tackle Ron Heller and center Dave Alexander, line mainstays last season. Heller has good size (6-6, 280) for the strongside anchor, fires out well and battles tenaciously. Despite long, strong arms, Heller is somewhat gangly, doesn't have a great base and can lose balance in pass protection. Speed rushers can give him fits. While Alexander isn't particularly quick, he is smart and probably could fill any line spot. He finished at tackle last season and played guard in '88. His good feet come in handy at center, but he lacks overpowering strength. Though his protection needs some work, Alexander should become a fixture at center.

Tackle Matt Darwin held out most of training camp and never did re-establish himself. Eventually, a knee injury put him on IR. He is a solid backside pass blocker with a sense of where the quarterback will be and the agility to mirror the rusher's moves. His run blocking is less distinguished. Solid backup Ken Reeves will challenge Darwin in camp. Like his former Texas A&M teammate, Reeves possesses good footwork but he may not have the mass and muscle for the outside.

Left guard Mike Schad, a purported No. 1 bust with the Rams ('86), signed with the Eagles prior to last season and missed only a handful of snaps. Schad (6-5, 290) has the physical tools but suffered from poor fundamentals, weak college competition (Queens College in Canada) and then inactivity. With his strength and good base, he can knock a defender 5 yards off the ball, but his slow feet and lack of lateral movement hurt him in pass blocking.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.5**

QUARTERBACK This could be the crossroads campaign for Randall Cunningham, the quintessential impact player who, a year ago, was touted as the prototype quarterback of the '90s. After two superlative seasons, he tailed off in '89 and for the first time heard those vitriolic, disapproving choruses from previously friendly Veterans Stadium. Welcome to superstatus, Mr. Cunningham.

Cunningham's TD-to-interception ratio was acceptable (21/15), and for the third straight year he led the Eagles in rushing (621 yards, 6.0 average, 4 TDs). In all, Cunningham contributed to 69 percent of the total offense.

Now the inconsistencies. His quarterback rating slipped (77.6 to 75.5) and his average gain per pass was wretched (6.39, only Dallas rookie Troy Aikman was worse). He often appeared confused and unsure, and lost his passing touch for long stretches. The Eagles' conservative offensive scheme and attempt to diversify their attack — after all, the Eagles would prefer Cunningham not lead the club in rushing — robbed the streak passer of his feel and rhythm. Certainly, he suffered because of injuries to his receivers, as well as the late-season death of quarterback coach Doug Scovil. Cunningham still has his quickness, athleticism and ability to fire accurate howitzers, and if he can get back on track, he'll have taken another step toward greatness. If the Eagles do lose faith, there are about 27 other teams who'd love getting a call.

In the offseason, Don McPherson was promoted to second string. Like Cunningham, McPherson is athletic, intelligent, mobile and streaky; unlike Cunningham, his arm is more pea-shooter than flamethrower. He has a very quick setup and a good release, but questionable accuracy. Matt Cavanaugh remains the safety net, though summer overtures to veteran Jim McMahon suggested other backup options.

GRADE (max. 10): **8.5**

RUNNING BACKS Coach Buddy Ryan's running back philosophy has changed dramatically, thanks to Keith Byars. After calling Byars his franchise back in 1986, Ryan nearly dismisses the idea of a 1,000-yard rusher. "If you have Eric Dickerson and want to give him the ball 50 times a game, then you can have a 1,000-yard rusher." The Eagles prefer to spot running backs, getting the ball to each starter about 12 times a game running or passing. Blitz blocking and versatility are mandatory; nearly all operate at both tailback or fullback in Philly's basic two-back scheme.

In the last two years, Byars has been more receiver than runner, catching 140 passes for 1,426 yards while rushing

for 969 yards. Despite his size (6-1, 238), he is not a strong in-line runner who can bounce off a shoulder hit, get into a tackler's arm, then run through. He runs too high and loses his leg drive in traffic. But he is clever in the open field, blocks well and has soft hands. On four-receiver situations, the Eagles usually move Byars and Keith Jackson into the slots, rather than substitute.

Fullback Anthony Toney is the club's most consistent runner but is frequently ailing (missing 12 games in four seasons) and, when nicked, does not play well. He has a quick burst and will embarrass arm tacklers, but won't see enough carries for big numbers. Toney is an above-average blocker, as the lead or against the blitz.

Two second-year backs, Robert Drummond and Heath Sherman, are versatile and provide health insurance. Drummond flashed briefly against San Diego — 151 yards running (77) and receiving (74) — before fading following limited opportunities. He is a solid runner with good lateral moves and hands. Sherman (6-0, 205) has excellent leg drive and breakaway capabilities. Unfortunately, with four fumbles in limited action, some of the big plays went the other way. Both need to add some beef to handle blitzers.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.0**

DEFENSIVE LINE It's hell-bound for the quarterback — play the run on the move — for the NFL's strongest, deepest defensive front. Carrying the Eagles to the '89 playoffs with a team-record 62 sacks, it was the heat up front that jacked a pass defense from last (in '88) to 12th.

Right tackle Jerome Brown was the main reason. Inconsistent through two pro seasons, he played like an All-Pro in '89. Despite an aching knee and a shoulder which required offseason surgery, Brown collected 10½ sacks (compared to nine in 28 previous games) and forced four fumbles. He no longer folded under a double-team as he relied less on rip techniques and pre-snap shifts, and switched to more counter moves. Extremely quick for a 295-pounder, he doesn't relax his power and strength to be quick — which means he can go around you, or over you. He frequently breaks into the backfield, and pursues well. His enthusiasm was as infectious as his maturity and improvement were impressive.

Left end Reggie White, elected to the NFL's Team of the Decade, had a fine year by most standards, but not by his. His 11 sacks were his lowest quarterback count in five Philadelphia years. A contract hassle contributed to his slow start while unprecedented double- and triple-teams cooled his jets during the season (Ryan racks up a healthy phone bill each week with laments to the league office about non-called holding violations). Speed (4.9), quickness and excellent strength and balance make White Hall of Fame special. Although his bag of moves bursts at the seams, he'll occasionally get stuck on straight-on kamikaze charges. However, by the end of the game it's the opposing tackle who considers hara kiri.

Right end Clyde Simmons is one of the NFL's most prolific big-play artists. He turned in his usual three forced fumbles and 60-yard TD return of an interception in '89, but this time he added a whopping 15½ sacks. While he doesn't have White's speed, he was the Eagles' most consistent lineman and a relentless pursuer. Simmons improved his run defense, and surpasses even White in using his great hand and arm strength to keep blockers at bay. He still isn't overwhelming at the point, but in a 4-3, it's not as critical. He is an excellent tackler.

Left tackle Mike Pitts is the team's quiet man in the middle. A fair pass rusher when left alone (especially when White shifts inside), Pitts has powerful arm strength, can control a blocker and stuff a double-team. He's tough to fool on draws and screens.

Subs Mike Golic and Steve Kaufusi give the Eagles the league's best six defensive linemen. Golic can play anywhere, is effective rushing upfield and has good body control and smarts. Kaufusi must learn better body control, but has exciting promise. **GRADE** (max. 10): **9.0**

LINEBACKERS Of all the improved players on this team, none were more improved than middle linebacker Byron Evans. He surprised coaches with his mental grasp and on-field control of Ryan's complicated 46 defense. He even moved up a notch in pass coverage, especially in his zone drops, though he still lacks lateral smoothness and consistent depth. He's a big hitter, lethal tackler (team-high 184 last year) and has slightly better than tackle-to-tackle range.

Left linebacker Seth Joyner remains on the brink of Pro Bowl recognition, but last year the big play was missing from his repertoire. He recorded 4½ sacks, had just one interception, and fell into a tie for sixth in tackles with 123. Joyner has the strength to fight off blockers, the athleticism to jump over cut blocks, and can finish plays. He's also the team's best coverage linebacker (the only starter to play in the nickel) and has the best grasp of the defense. Last year, he helped Evans make audible calls.

The jury is out on new starting right outside linebacker Jessie Small, who has good size (6-3, 238), better-than-average speed (4.7) and boundless hustle. The alleged hit man in the "bounty" flap with Dallas kicker Luis Zendejas, Small started only one game as a rookie last year but is projected ahead of 11-year, high-salaried Al Harris. Small lacks pass-defense experience and his turn-and-run technique is raw. But he's a solid prospect who can play off blockers and keep his feet.

Unless Small stumbles, it's unlikely the Eagles will keep Harris as a backup. Second-year middle linebacker Britt Hager has good range but needs more bulk/strength.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.5**

DEFENSIVE BACKS Philadelphia's secondary is striking in its contrast: youth and speed at the corners, experience and a step slow at safety. Although the future rests with talented Eric Allen and Izel Jenkins on the corners, the defense is anchored by the safeties' aggressive run support.

Despite a league-wide bad-boy reputation, strong safety Andre Waters was flagged less in '89 and became more of a student of the game. He already has a Ph.D. in throwing his body around against the rush. He reads his keys well, forces the sweep and provides linebacker-like, inside-out support on the line of scrimmage. His marks on pass coverage aren't nearly as impressive. Waters especially gets into trouble when he overextends and tries to help out in someone else's area.

Free safety Wes Hopkins is a smart player who still delivers the big hit. His range is still intact, though his maneuverability hasn't been the same following a knee injury that sidelined him for most of '86 and all of '87. A limited pass defender, he is vulnerable when stuck with deep half-field responsibility, and often comes out on obvious passing downs. Another leader, he helped direct the secondary's multiple coverages.

Pro Bowl right corner Eric Allen is the rising star. He's smart, swift (4.45), has good hands and led the NFC with eight interceptions. Allen is like a chameleon, changing his style to take advantage of a receiver's weakness. His recovery speed is excellent, as are his positioning, timing and close. He also can get physical despite his size (5-10, 188). For the next five or six Februarys, you can reach him in Honolulu.

In his first starting season, left corner Izel Jenkins improved with each game. He was burned early and occasionally suffered some ugly technique breakdowns but has the mental toughness the position requires. A good tackler, his overaggressiveness closing on receivers resulted in some big plays for the other guys. When it comes to forcing sweeps, he's like a freight train. Eventually, Jenkins might be moved to strong safety.

Backup William Frizzell can play both safety spots, corner and even linebacker in the nickel. A tall (6-3), rangy type, he matches up better against physical receivers like Washington's Art Monk than with smaller, niftier wideouts. Over the last two years, he's had a knack for making big late-game saves, with two of his four interceptions wrapping up victories. Safety Terry Hoage was active for just six games because of knee tendinitis, but he's an intelligent player who could challenge Hopkins.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.0**

SPECIAL TEAMS Last year, Ryan went through four kickers and three punters (not counting quarterback Cunningham's six punts and 53.2-yard average). The Eagles finally settled on Roger Ruzek who, after arriving from Dallas for the final five games, hit eight of 11 field goals. John Teltschik (39.4 average, 35.3 net) is a two-step punter with good hang time. He's undergone two arthroscopic knee surgeries, but has good athletic ability.

Punt coverage was No. 1 in the NFL (5.8 average) while kickoff coverage was 24th (21.8). The Eagles still are searching for a return threat. They averaged under 17 yards on kickoff returns. **GRADE** (max. 10): **4.5**

COACHING/ ORGANIZATION When the season ended, coach Buddy Ryan, completing the fourth year of a five-year contract, was vocal in reminding management that he wanted an extension, but hands-on owner Norman Braman was in no hurry to accommodate. The scenario promises to produce a tense situation every time the Eagles start to falter. For all his irascibility, Ryan deserves major recognition and credit for the Eagles' 21 regular season wins (1988-89) and two straight playoff appearances. He has developed solid lines on either side of the football. If only he'd quit firing up the opposition with his weekly ill-advised remarks.

The Eagles lost a solid personnel evaluator, Bill Davis, who disagreed too often with Ryan. The death of quarterback coach Doug Scovil, whom Ryan did get along with, was a blow to the whole team, especially Cunningham, who credited Scovil for molding him into a Pro Bowler. On the hot seat from the opening whistle is new offensive coordinator Rich Kotite. **GRADE** (max. 10): **7.0**

DRAFT As is Ryan's way, he quickly anointed Smith as the starting free safety ahead of Wes Hopkins. It looks like a good move. Smith covers well in man or zone, has good ball reactions and is a hard tackler. The Eagles went on their wide receiver star search in the second, third, fifth and 11th rounds. All have 4.5 or better speed; none are sure things. Bellamy has soft hands and played in a pro-style offense; Barnett is bigger, faster but played in a wishbone; Williams has decent hands but sloppy routes.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.5**

1990 DRAFT round number (pick in round; overall sequence): 1 (24,22) BEN SMITH, DB, Georgia; 2. (25,50) MIKE BELLAMY, WR, Illinois; 3. (24,77) FRED BARNETT, WR, Arkansas State; 5. (24,133) CALVIN WILLIAMS, WR, Purdue; 6. (25,162) KEVIN THOMPSON, DB, Oklahoma; 7. (24,189) TERRY STROUF, OT, Wisconsin-La Crosse; 8. (25,217) CURT DYKES, OT, Oregon; 9. (24,244) CECIL GRAY, DT, North Carolina; 10. (25,273) ORLANDO ADAMS, DT, Jacksonville State (Ala.); 11. (18,294) JOHN HUDSON, C, Auburn; 11. (24,300) TYRONE WATSON, WR, Tennessee State; 12. (25,327) JUDD GARRETT, RB, Princeton.

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VETERANS ROSTER

NO.	NAME	POS.	HT.	WT.	BIRTH-DATE	COLLEGE	NFL EXP.
72	Alexander, D.	C-T	6-3	282	7/28/64	Tulsa	4
21	Allen, E	CB	5-10	188	11/22/65	Arizona State	3
49	Bell, T	SS	6-1	215	11/28/58	Ohio State	9
99	Brown, J.	DT	6-2	295	2/4/65	Miami (Fla.)	4
41	Byars, K	RB	6-1	238	10/14/63	Ohio State	5
80	Carter, C.	WR	6-3	198	11/25/65	Ohio State	4
6	Cavanaugh, M.	QB	6-2	210	10/27/56	Pittsburgh	13
12	Cunningham, R.	QB	6-4	203	3/27/63	Nevada-Las Vegas	6
78	Darwin, M.	T	6-4	275	3/11/63	Texas A&M	5
36	Drummond, R.	RB	6-1	205	6/21/67	Syracuse	2
84	Edwards, A.	WR	5-11	195	5/26/66	N.M. Highlands	2
56	Evans, B.	LB	6-2	235	2/23/64	Arizona	4
33	Frizzell, W.	S-CB	6-3	206	9/8/62	N.C. Central	7
86	Garrity, G.	WR	5-10	175	11/24/60	Penn State	8
90	Golic, M.	DT	6-5	275	12/12/62	Notre Dame	5
54	Hager, B.	LB	6-1	222	2/20/66	Texas	2
95	Harris, A.	LB	6-5	265	12/31/56	Arizona State	11
73	Heller, R.	T	6-6	280	8/25/62	Penn State	7
34	Hoage, T.	FS	6-3	201	4/11/62	Georgia	7
48	Hopkins, W.	FS	6-1	215	9/26/61	SMU	7
88	Jackson, K.	TE	6-2	250	4/19/65	Oklahoma	3
46	Jenkins, I.	CB	5-10	191	5/27/64	N.C. State	3
85	Johnson, R.	WR	6-3	190	9/21/58	Long Beach St.	6
31	Jones, T.	SS	6-4	223	11/9/66	Arkansas State	2
59	Joyner, S.	LB	6-2	248	11/18/64	Texas-El Paso	5
94	Kaufusi, S.	DE-DT	6-4	274	10/17/63	Brigham Young	2
87	*Le Bel, H.	TE	6-4	251	7/14/63	Colorado State	2
37	Lilly, S.	CB	5-9	178	2/12/65	Georgia Tech	2
	McMahon, J.	QB	6-1	198	8/21/59	Brigham Young	9
9	McPherson, D.	QB	6-1	193	4/2/65	Syracuse	2
74	Pitts, M.	DT	6-5	277	9/25/60	Alabama	8
82	Quick, M.	WR	6-2	195	5/14/59	N.C. State	9
66	Reeves, K.	T-G	6-5	270	10/4/61	Texas A&M	6
50	Rimington, D.	C-G	6-3	285	5/22/60	Nebraska	8
7	Ruzek, R.	K	6-1	195	12/17/60	Weber State	4
79	Schad, M.	G	6-5	290	10/2/63	Queens (Canada)	3
51	Shaw, R.	LB	6-4	240	7/28/65	Oklahoma State	3
23	Sherman, H.	RB	6-0	190	3/27/67	Texas A&M	2
96	Simmons, C.	DE	6-6	275	8/4/64	Western Carolina	5
68	Singletary, R.	G-T	6-3	285	1/17/64	N.C. State	4
52	Small, J.	LB	6-3	239	11/30/66	Eastern Kentucky	2
65	Solt, R.	G	6-3	288	5/19/62	Maryland	6
61	Tamburello, B.	G-C	6-3	278	9/9/64	Auburn	3
10	Teltschik, J.	P	6-2	210	3/8/64	Texas	5
25	Toney, A.	FB	6-0	227	9/23/62	Texas A&M	5
20	Waters, A.	SS	5-11	199	3/10/62	Cheyney	7
83	*Werner, G.	TE	6-4	236	10/21/66	De Pauw	2
92	White, R.	DE	6-5	285	12/19/61	Tennessee	6

*Plan B free agent

WASHINGTON REDSKINS

1989 RECORD: 10-6 HEAD COACH: JOE GIBBS STADIUM: ROBERT F. KENNEDY (55,671)

Washington was in contention for the decade's most-dominant status until San Francisco copped back-to-back Super Bowl victories. With three Super Bowl appearances of their own in the '80s, the Redskins have managed to win despite being immersed in transition. Their success is a testament to the entire organization.

This state of transformation will be no different in 1990. General manager Charley Casserly is in his first full year after replacing Bobby Beathard. Nine-year veteran offensive line coach Joe Bugel took the head job in Phoenix, and several player positions are in transition. It would be a crisis season for a lot of teams, but Joe Gibbs finds ways to get the job done. The Redskins were serious Plan B free agent participants, signing 12, including some quality players who should contribute.

Aside from the 49ers, the Redskins were the only NFL team last season whose offense and defense both finished in the top 10. The fast-finishing Redskins — losing more than two games in the second halves of seasons only once in the '80s — narrowly missed the 1989 playoffs with a furious five-game win streak. If they correct their 4-4 start of a year ago, the 'Skins will be strong NFC title contenders.

WIDE RECEIVERS/ TIGHT END

The first time three receivers on a single team each gained more than 1,000 yards was in 1980 when Gibbs was the offensive coordinator of the San Diego Chargers. Last year, Redskins Art Monk (1,186), Ricky Sanders (1,138) and Gary Clark (1,229) became the second group to do the trick.

The beauty of "The Posse" trio is in its differing styles. Monk, 32, is the possession receiver, but is really much more. While conceding a step to age, his long strides and 6-3, 209-pound frame are poison to the NFL's growing population of little cornerbacks. Monk is strong enough to muscle past man coverage at the line, and often gains a step with his counter-bump. Against zones, experience has taught him when to go into his cut a step early, and when to break to the seam a yard or two deeper. When defenses overplay, Monk has the acceleration to run by 'em.

Mark Rypien

Clark has sprinter's speed and a tight end's nerve. Considered the Posse's most dangerous, Clark's trademark pattern is the deep post, driving a corner hard, closing down, then sharply breaking to the middle. He makes up for a lack of height (5-9) with 4.5 speed. Fearlessly willing to extend over the middle, Clark leads the circuit in horizontal catches. He has the trio's best combination of foot speed and body control, and his catch-and-spin escape move is lethal. At times his competitive zeal will result in lost cool and concentration.

Sanders turned in his second-straight 1,000-yard season as he continued to profit from stretched-out secondaries. He has Clark's 4.5 speed but is not the fearless technician. Often the man in motion, he has excellent change of direction and excels after the catch, either with a strong cutback move or straight-ahead burst. Sanders, quickest of the three, has an obvious preference for speed routes and deep corners, but can be challenged physically. He has superb hands and makes tremendous ball adjustments.

Experienced, accomplished Don Warren is a vintage Gibbs tight end. You don't notice Warren until he beats you. All the bells and whistles attract defenses to the wideouts, then the 11-year veteran makes the big catch (11.1 yard avg. in '89). He has reliable hands and never gets hung up releasing off the line. An outstanding in-line blocker, he normally stays in to protect the quarterback on second and third down, though he plays a key role on the Redskins' trademark counter-trap, engaging the defensive end before taking on weakside pursuit. He is so thoroughly scouted for that backside block that when the Redskins fake the counter, he is invariably wide open. Mike Tice fits nicely in the big-guys lineups with Warren, Gerald Riggs and Earnest Byner. Tice (6-7) is a tower and comes back to the ball well as a receiver, but runs stiff and is not nimble in his routes or blocking. **GRADE** (max. 10): **8.5**

OFFENSIVE LINE

No other area better underscores the depth and resourcefulness of the Redskins. With three starters injured last season, Washington surrendered a mere 21 sacks, second lowest in the league. Even with the infusion of some new, friskier Hogs, this is still the strength of the team. Tackle Joe Jacoby (6-7, 310), guard Russ Grimm (6-3, 275) and guard-tackle Mark May (6-6, 300) had knee injuries last year but were all protected in Plan B.

Right tackle Jacoby is on the shakiest ground. He made it through nine years almost entirely because of his bulk, strength and death-grip hands, but his latest knee injury may have sapped the last of his limited quickness. If he can still divert an outside speed rusher, Jacoby will play. If not, his job could go to Ed Simmons, who finished the season as a starter. A sixth-round pick out of Eastern Washington, Simmons went from long shot to near-bonanza when the athletic 6-5, 300-pounder was thrown into the fire. He has the mobility, quick feet and long arms to shadow the speed ends, and he delivers a solid blow off the line.

May, who was replaced at right guard by Mark Schlereth in Week 9, can play either guard or tackle. One of the league's most under-penalized players, May's clutching and grabbing exhibition belongs in the Smithsonian. The 'Skins hope the knee injury hasn't robbed what was left of his already eroded pulling speed on sweeps. Added muscle has helped his drive blocking, but his strength is still rooted in sound pass techniques and blocking in space. Over the offseason, Schlereth bulked up to 285. A 10th-round pick out of Idaho last season and the only NFL player to hail from Alaska, Schlereth is fairly quick, has decent feet and showed excellent control pulling on counters. His rapid development was another testimony to Bugel's coaching.

Grimm has been the inspirational leader of the Hogs, and helped make Washington's counter-trey an NFL textbook staple. But his quickness and explosion off the ball isn't what it once was. Grimm might make it back at left guard, but if beaten out by Raleigh McKenzie, can back up both guard and center. McKenzie finished as a starter and is developing into a good power player with decent feet, excellent lower-body strength and straight-ahead drive. The line's best athlete, he has the speed to get into the second tier and seal off pursuit. His problems come on pass blocking. Although he sets up quickly, when he tries to lock-on inside, his short reach often lets pass rushers off the hook. Once they wiggle loose, quarterbacks better have lunch ready.

Center Jeff Bostic (6-2, 260), the only offensive player to start all 16 games last year, has always made up for a lack of size with a clear understanding of leverage and technique. When he does get overmatched by nose tackles, his surrounding giants come to the rescue. He moves well laterally, plays with intelligence and knows the value of good positioning, especially as the post blocker on double-teams.

Left tackle Jim Lachey has it all — size (6-6, 290), strength, smarts, balance, quickness — plus a burning desire to excel. His calling cards are boxer-like hands and a two-fisted stun jab on the snap that disrupts defensive ends, who find it difficult to make a move while out of breath. He has excellent body control in pass protection, dropsteps quickly and redirects well. He gets a good pop off the line, sustains his drive blocks and is equally effective pulling.

Guard Mark Adickes (Plan B, Kansas City) is another big body who looks like a fit. While he gets off the line quickly, he doesn't sustain well. He's a decent technician in tight quarters and can find his target pulling outside, but often loses his base in pass protection and puts the passer in jeopardy. **GRADE** (max. 10): **7.5**

QUARTERBACK

In training camp a year ago, Mark Rypien beat out overrated Jay Schroeder and aging Doug Williams for the starting position. By midseason he had turned on the guy in the mirror, taking himself out of the picture with 11 fumbles in 12 sacks (he had 14 for the season) before being replaced for two games by Williams.

It is an entirely different scene this season. Schroeder and Williams are gone, and the strong-armed, lumbering Rypien is clearly the No. 1 man. He was at the helm for the season-ending five-game win streak, during which time he completed 65 percent of his passes for eight touchdowns and 1,430 yards, while running for another score. In all, he threw 22 touchdown passes last year (against only 13 interceptions), and completed 58.8 percent of his passes (280 for 476), for 3,768 yards. His 88.1 QB rating was good enough for fifth in the NFL — ahead of such notables as Jim Kelly, Don Majkowski, Bernie Kosar and Phil Simms — as he earned a place in the Pro Bowl and put the Redskins on top of the league in passing offense.

Rypien is a stand-tall pocket passer with poise and accuracy. He has good velocity on his fastball, yet can take something off for screens and underneath routes. He has a big-game penchant, racking up three efforts of 350 yards or more passing, but if he gets off to bad start has a tough time getting back on track. He has a mechanically sound delivery, throws all the passes in the playbook and for a young quarterback, seems to read defenses well. Then again, he usually has all day long to decide. One scout called him the next Joe Montana; most think he's a couple Super Bowl MVPs shy of Joe's class.

Two-year understudy Stan Humphries has a powerful arm, good instincts and nimble feet, but the former Northeast Louisiana star lacks experience against big-time competition. Veteran Plan B (Giants) pickup Jeff Rutledge is a sharp, short-game master but doesn't have the gun to play long ball.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.0**

RUNNING BACKS In the club's ongoing audition for the lead role in Gibbs' one-back attack, Gerald Riggs (from Atlanta) looked like the right stuff (322 yards rushing in two games) until a game-costing fumble against the Eagles and nagging bruised arch demoralized him. Earnest Byner (from Cleveland) took over in the last five weeks and seemed like a better fit. This season, two more big-name backs, James Wilder and Kelvin Bryant, enter the derby. The end result is depth galore.

Byner is the most complete. He can bang between tackles a la John Riggins, or go in motion, block like a guard or impersonate a tight end (54 catches). When he lines up wide, he draws safety attention. While he doesn't have the speed to run away from a quick linebacker in space, his first couple of steps are outstanding. He reads well and lets his blockers do their job without running up their backs. He has great second-effort pop and smells the goal line, scoring five of his seven rushing touchdowns in the final five games. Few can rival Byner's ability to both find the hole and get through it quickly.

Riggs gives the 'Skins the big back they covet. He's capable of going north-south for 20 carries and having something left for the fourth quarter. He gets his shoulders upfield and punishes defenses between the tackles. For insurance, Washington picked up Wilder (Plan B, Tampa Bay), showing once again that the team's fabric is still woven in a "future is now" philosophy. Wilder left his burst in Tampa, but he's a determined runner in the dive holes, blocks and catches well.

Bryant missed all of 1989 with a neck injury and will have to pass a physical before he'll catch any passes. He is best suited as a third-down situational receiver.

GRADE (max. 10): **7.0**

DEFENSIVE LINE Richie Petitbon's theory of run-plugging tackles and crashing ends is hardly radical, but his execution has been remarkable. Troubled by injuries, agonized by age and distracted by Dexter Manley's well-chronicled drug problems, last year's defense allowed only 10 second-half points over the final seven games. There's little speed, even less Pro Bowl talent, and yet the defense finished second in the NFL against the run.

One such Pro Bowl performer, left end Charles Mann, delivered a team-high 31 hurries and 9½ sacks. Relieved of point duty against the run, Mann disdains any containment responsibilities and heads out pell-mell upfield. He has good quickness and sheds blockers well, but doesn't close on the passer with the burst and fury of a Bruce Smith.

With Manley apparently finished, right end Fred Stokes will get the first shot to prove his big-play performance in five starts last season was no fluke. He has a big league burst off the line, and tallied three sacks, three forced fumbles and as many tackles behind the line in those five starts. He has a good outside move and quick first step, but at 262 pounds must prove he can cope with 290-pound tackles week-in week-out.

Right tackle Darryl Grant lacks flash but won't be ignored. He's more of a technique player these days, staying low at 6-1 and using his strong foundation to leverage taller offensive linemen. He has enough upfield charge to prevent consistent double-teaming on his teammates, but his strength is staying home, moving laterally and shutting down the inside. The bigger the game, the bigger he plays.

Tracy Rocker (6-3, 290) took over when Markus Koch was hurt, and never looked back. An all-rookie selection, Rocker embarrassed scouts who rated him a physical (bad knee) and mental (bad attitude) risk. Rocker is bigger than Grant, has super upper-body strength and keeps his feet. He's more of a hole-plugger than a glider, lacking much upfield push or lateral movement.

Koch can play either tackle or end. He has strong hands but lacks quick feet. The Redskins hope to find depth from free agent Alonzo Mitz (Seattle) or Plan B additions James Geathers, Pat Swoopes (New Orleans) and Milford Hodge (New England).

GRADE (max. 10): **6.5**

LINEBACKERS After paying dearly for Wilber Marshall with two No. 1's and $6 million, the Redskins have seemingly miscast the exceptional right outside linebacker. Marshall's greatest asset — running free and making big impromptu plays — has been tempered in a disciplined, platooning scheme. Marshall still has superb speed and terrific upper-body strength, but since the Redskins shoot their ends on early downs and pull him in nickel situations, his chances to blitz are few. In coverage, he's tentative and no doubt prefers the forward gears. Still, Marshall has been productive. He's started every game the past two seasons, and last year had a team-high eight tackles behind the line of scrimmage, finished third in total tackles (108), third in sacks (4), second in QB hurries (14), recovered two fumbles, forced another one and had an interception. He's a talent this defense must fully exploit.

Greg Manusky fills the minimum requirement for Redskins middle linebackers. He relishes butting heads with drive blockers and dive backs, but can be fooled easily by more finesse-oriented attacks that throw traps, influence or misdirection his way. He lacks mobility but is a solid run defender on first and second downs.

Ravin Caldwell (fourth year) and Monte Coleman (12th year) will platoon at left linebacker. Caldwell is a key special teams guy who faltered a bit as an every-down player. He made a lot of tackles (97) last year but not a lot of big plays (3½ sacks), though he wasn't often sent on blitzes. He'll tease at times, but so far he's been little more than a run defender. Coleman is one of the game's premier nickel linebackers, even at age 32. He can deliver a good chuck, recover, read the quarterback and still beat the running back or tight end to the spot. His coverage instincts resulted in two pickoffs, one returned for a 24-yard touchdown.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.5**

DEFENSIVE BACKS A top-flight cornerback needs a surplus of speed and a lack of conscience. In Darrell Green, the Redskins have the prototype. Returning after missing the last nine games with injuries, Green takes on the opposition's quickest gun. His leaping ability, body control, change of direction and catchup acceleration are outstanding. He reads receivers as well as anybody, and is respected around the league for his ability to detect a receiver's intended routes. Which leads to his weakness — he loves to gamble, will overplay and tries too hard to intercept. He's consequently vulnerable to stop-and-gos and out-and-ups. Still, his major flaw is a growing disinterest in run support. Martin Mayhew started seven games and is a more cautious, cushion defender who prefers action in front of him. A track man with Green's 4.4 speed, Mayhew is compact (5-8, 172) but much more physical against the run.

A.J. Johnson started eight games and will step into the right corner starting position. He covers better than Mayhew and likes to play close to the line on a receiver's shoulder. He backpedals smoothly and can turn in tandem with route runners, but will often bite too hard on initial moves. Athletic Brian Davis started nine games last year and played in the team's six-back looks. A long-legged 6-2, he matches up well with bigger, physical wideouts but has trouble drop-stepping with the quicker ones.

Safeties Alvin Walton (strong) and Todd Bowles (free) finished first and second on the team in tackles last year. Walton is a tough run supporter but gets exposed in man coverage. With limited closing speed and change of direction, he's much better roaming in a zone.

Bowles relies on anticipation, not speed, to cover the field. He has good range and is more consistent in coverage than Walton. Bowles doesn't hesitate helping out on the run, allowing the 'Skins to rotate their safeties. A smart, good ball athlete, his pre-snap "cheating" (indicating his overshift) is well-disguised, often taking away a quarterback's chance to audible.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.5**

SPECIAL TEAMS The golden days of Redskins special teams play have passed. Coverage teams were among the league's worst: 25th in punts, 21st on kickoffs. Adding Walter Stanley, the NFC's top punt returner, via Plan B (Detroit) should boost the team's average return units. On the brighter side, punter Ralf Mojsiejenko netted 33.3 and nailed 21 inside the 20. Chip Lohmiller made 26 of 28 field goal attempts inside the 40 (only 3 for 12 beyond 40) and was second in NFL scoring.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.0**

COACHING/ ORGANIZATION The brain drain continues. Gone are Joe Bugel (Phoenix head coach) and general manager Bobby Beathard and offensive mind Dan Henning (both San Diego). But Gibbs' silent strength is still in his staff, and there's plenty of think left in this tank. By adding Rod Dowhower to the passing game and replacing line coach Bugel with Jim Hanifan, the offense shouldn't miss a beat. Defensive coordinator Richie Petitbon enters his 13th season and running backs coach Don Breaux his 10th in Washington.

Head coach Joe Gibbs is still the focal point, and the club's open checkbook policy — a league-high $1,150,000 in 1990 Plan B signing bonuses — shows management is still behind the master's plan. Gibbs has led Washington to six 10-win seasons in the '80s, second only to San Francisco's eight. He's a superlative tactician and workaholic.

The toughest act to follow belongs to new GM Charley Casserly, who must try and steer the team's drafts and player moves as adroitly as Beathard.

GRADE (max. 10): **8.0**

DRAFT For the 18th time in 21 years, the Redskins didn't have a top pick. Collins runs and covers like a safety and, unfortunately, is also built like one. If the Redskins can protect him from the power running game, he has the speed and range to inject new life into the club's aging 'backers. Considered by some as a low first-rounder, Elewonibi has Hog size and cat-quick feet, but lacks aggressiveness. Strong-armed Conklin had a productive career and showed late signs of taming his scatter gun.

GRADE (max. 10): **4.0**

1990 DRAFT round number (pick in round; overall sequence): 2. (21,46) ANDRE COLLINS, LB, Penn State; 3. (23,76) MOHAMMED ELEWONIBI, OG, Brigham Young; 4. (5,86) CARY CONKLIN, QB, Washington; 4. (28,109) RICO LABBE, DB, Boston College; 5. (21,130) BRIAN MITCHELL, RB, Southwest Louisiana; 6. (23,160) KENT WELLS, DT, Nebraska; 9. (23,243) TIM MOXLEY, OG, Ohio State; 10. (14,262) D'JUAN FRANCISCO, DB, Notre Dame; 10. (22,270) THOMAS RAYAM, DT, Alabama; 11. (21,297) JON LEVERENZ, LB, Minnesota.

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VETERANS ROSTER

NO.	NAME	POS.	HT.	WT.	BIRTH-DATE	COLLEGE	NFL EXP.
61	*Adickes, M.	OG	6-4	275	4/22/61	Baylor	5
53	Bostic, J.	C	6-2	260	9/18/58	Clemson	11
23	Bowles, T.	FS	6-2	203	11/18/63	Temple	5
29	Branch, R.	RB	5-11	235	10/22/62	East Carolina	6
67	Brown, R.	T	6-5	280	12/12/62	Arkansas State	5
38	*Brown, T.	RB	6-1	228	11/20/64	Pittsburgh	2
24	Bryant, K.	RB	6-2	195	9/26/60	North Carolina	4
21	Byner, E.	RB	5-10	215	9/15/62	East Carolina	7
50	Caldwell, R.	LB	6-3	229	8/4/63	Arkansas	4
84	Clark, G.	WR	5-9	173	5/1/62	James Madison	6
51	Coleman, M.	LB	6-2	230	11/4/57	Central Arkansas	12
34	Davis, B.	CB	6-2	190	8/31/63	Nebraska	4
26	Davis, W.	CB	5-11	180	7/17/63	Indiana State	6
25	Dupard, R.	RB	5-11	205	10/30/63	SMU	5
97	*Geathers, J.	DE	6-7	290	6/26/60	Wichita State	6
77	Grant, D.	DT	6-1	275	11/22/59	Rice	10
28	Green, D.	CB	5-8	170	2/15/60	Texas A&I	8
68	Grimm, R.	G	6-3	275	5/2/59	Pittsburgh	10
75	*Hodge, M.	DL	6-3	278	3/11/61	Washington State	5
80	Howard, J.	WR	5-8	170	12/21/62	Notre Dame	3
16	Humphries, S.	QB	6-2	223	4/14/65	Northeastern La.	2
66	Jacoby, J.	T	6-7	310	7/6/59	Louisville	10
47	Johnson, A.J.	CB	5-8	176	6/22/67	SW Texas State	2
74	Koch, M.	DE	6-5	275	2/13/63	Boise State	5
79	Lachey, J.	T	6-6	290	6/4/63	Ohio State	6
8	Lohmiller, C.	K	6-3	213	7/16/66	Minnesota	3
71	Mann, C.	DE	6-6	270	4/12/61	Nevada-Reno	8
91	Manusky, G.	LB	6-1	242	8/12/66	Colgate	3
58	Marshall, W.	LB	6-1	230	4/18/62	Florida	7
73	May, M.	G-T	6-6	295	11/2/59	Pittsburgh	10
35	Mayhew, M.	CB	5-8	172	10/8/65	Florida State	2
57	*McArthur, K	LB	6-2	250	5/11/63	Lamar	5
63	McKenzie, R.	C-G	6-2	270	2/8/63	Tennessee	6
48	*Middleton, R.	TE	6-2	255	7/17/65	Auburn	5
62	Mitz, A.	DE	6-3	275	6/5/63	Florida	5
2	Mojsiejenko, R.	P	6-2	212	1/28/63	Michigan State	6
81	Monk, A.	WR	6-3	209	12/5/57	Syracuse	11
37	Riggs, G.	RB	6-1	232	11/6/60	Arizona State	9
99	Rocker, T.	DT	6-3	288	4/9/66	Auburn	2
10	*Rutledge, J.	QB	6-1	195	1/22/57	Alabama	12
11	Rypien, M.	QB	6-4	234	10/2/62	Washington State	4
83	Sanders, R.	WR	5-11	180	8/30/62	SW Texas State	5
69	Schlereth, M.	C	6-3	285	1/25/66	Idaho	2
76	Simmons, E.	T	6-5	300	12/31/63	Eastern Washington	4
89	*Stanley, W.	WR	5-9	180	11/5/62	Mesa (Colo.)	6
60	Stokes, F.	DE	6-3	262	3/14/64	Georgia Southern	4
64	*Swoopes, P.	DT	6-3	280	3/4/64	Mississippi State	3
86	Tice, M.	TE	6-7	247	2/2/59	Maryland	10
40	Walton, A.	SS	6-0	180	3/14/64	Kansas	5
85	Warren, D.	TE	6-4	242	5/5/56	San Diego State	12
32	*Wilder, J.	RB	6-3	225	5/12/58	Missouri	10

*Plan B free agent

PHOENIX CARDINALS

1989 RECORD: 5-11 HEAD COACH: JOE BUGEL STADIUM: SUN DEVIL (74,707)

In the past nine months, the Phoenix Cardinals have changed coaches, slashed ticket prices, unveiled a new marketing scheme, switched the color of their uniform pants (to red) and prepared to move into a state-of-the-art, 92,000-square-foot training facility. Unfortunately, the team on the field is the same one that beat only Dallas (1-15) and Atlanta (3-13) following the season's second week, then ended the year on a six-game losing streak.

Rookie head man Joe Bugel, longtime offensive line coach for the Redskins, takes over a club with aging backs and receivers, inexperienced quarterbacks and little depth on defense. At least he has the support of the front office, something fired Gene Stallings found he had little of following the 11th game.

Bugel will try to get the Cardinals into the playoffs for the first non-strike season (they made it in 1982) since 1975. Don't hold your breath. The Cardinals still are paying for past drafting mistakes. And the Arizona fans, turned off by high-priced tickets the first two seasons, aren't impressed by cosmetic changes.

WIDE RECEIVERS/ TIGHT END

Everybody said injuries would finally catch up with J.T. Smith (34) and Roy Green (33), and last year they did. Smith missed the final seven weeks with leg and ankle injuries, Green four weeks with a fractured collarbone. How much longer can they last? A year ago, they combined for only 106 catches, fewest since 1985, their first year together.

Despite the absence of quarterback Neil Lomax, who missed all of last season and eventually retired with an arthritic left hip, Smith was leading the league with 62 receptions. Smith hasn't "lost a step" because he didn't have one in the first place. Of the 97 NFC pass catchers with 15 or more receptions last season, no wide receiver had a shorter "long" catch than Smith (31 yards). But you need a first down? Smith can find the seam, free himself from defenders and go get it. Soft hands, quick feet, timing and pride make him one of the best at moving the chains.

Green (44 catches, 703 yards, 7 TDs) no longer is a true burner. The ol' one-move-then-dust-'em just doesn't work anymore. He still has fine cutting ability, good speed and the craftiness to get plenty of respect from corners. He reads defenses well and knows how to get into a defender, separate and get open. Yet Green has been hurt five of the past six seasons, and when he's out the Cardinals sorely miss his Pro Bowl presence.

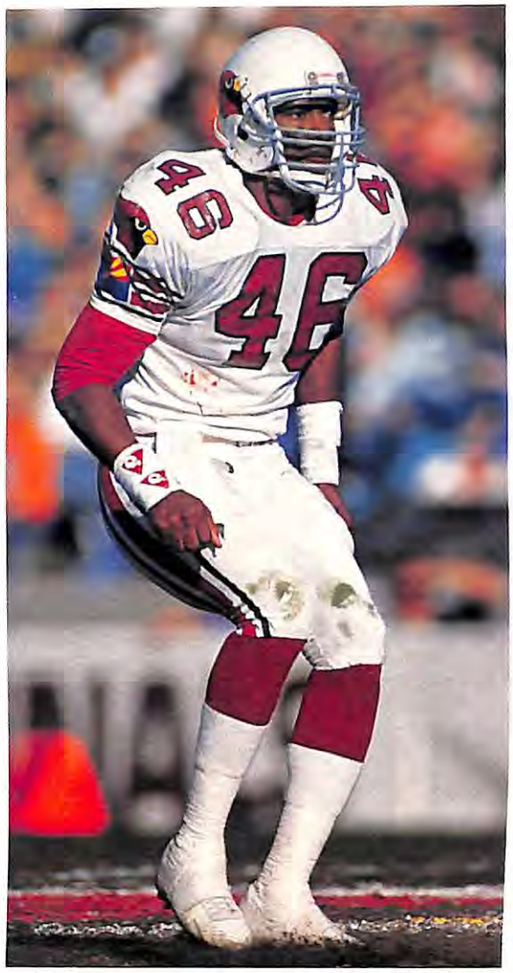
Ernie Jones, a third-year pro, is not fast but continues to be a big-play receiver. He led the team in 1988 with 21.6 yards per catch and was second last year with an 18.6 average on 45 receptions, including a 72-yard, game-winning score against Dallas. Using counter moves to make up for his lack of speed, Jones is a control receiver with consistent hands and toughness. Fourth receiver Donnie Holmes is all speed, no hands.

Tight end Robert Awalt became a forgotten man in last year's offense, catching just 33 passes, none making it to the end zone. Although his blocking gets a bit better each year, Awalt's forte is catching the football. He is an excellent receiver who blows through jamming strongside linebackers. He can cover some ground, too. In a division with Keith Jackson and Mark Bavaro, Awalt is third, but not a distant third. Walter Reeves, a second-round pick a year ago, is Awalt's alter ego: a punishing blocker at the point of attack with stone hands.

GRADE (max 10.): **6.5**

OFFENSIVE LINE

How beat-up was the line last season? Veteran Joe Bostic re-injured a knee. Out for the season. Starting right tackle Tootie Robbins suffered a knee injury in the season opener. Six weeks. Pro Bowl left tackle Luis Sharpe injured a knee. Two games. Starting left guard Todd Peat never got into shape and walked off the field during practice. He was cut after the first four games. Center Derek Kennard was placed on the non-football illness list after his second arrest for drunk driving. As a result, the Cardinals had to play a makeshift line all season and wound up surrendering 56 sacks, third-most in the league.



Tim McDonald

This year's new look centers, literally, around Bill Lewis, a Plan B free agent who rode the Raiders bench in 1989 following a salary scrap with Al Davis. At 6-7, 275, Lewis is not built like your classic center but certainly has a sufficient size/speed package. He has the strength and long arms to handle most bull rushers but is limited sliding in the pocket. As a run blocker, his long legs lack the explosiveness you'd like. Yet, overall, Lewis is a heady player who should help this club.

With Lewis at center, the Cards now can switch Kennard to left guard, his natural position. At center, Kennard's short arms often allowed stronger nose tackles to get into his body; at guard, Kennard's quick feet and good, low setup make him more effective pass blocking. Without a man on his nose, he can fire out better on the run.

Sharpe, a perennial Pro Bowl selection, remains one of the game's textbook pass blockers. He has great feet, balance and feel for the rush. Like the proficient pulling guard who nails his man, then looks for more downfield, Sharpe can keep his inside hand on the end and still put a body on an outside blitzer. He put a charge to his run blocking last season, though no one is confusing him with Mike Munchak.

Only right guard Lance Smith didn't miss a game last season. More blue-collar than blue-chip, Smith had a good year despite lacking great size and athletic ability. He's an overachiever who's fairly light on his feet and relies on smooth techniques. He's especially effective run blocking, yet gave up only one sack.

Robbins, who underwent ankle surgery following the 1988 season, didn't fully recover and was plagued by injuries throughout the season. He's not a natural knee-bent athlete, never has been a smash-mouth guy and, despite decent explosion off the ball, has blown his share of short-yardage situations. If he drops weight and can stay healthy, he certainly has the mass and quick feet to be an adequate pass blocker.

Rookie first-rounder Joe Wolf, a guard, signed late and was forced to fill Robbins' tackle spot. Before the year was out, he had played every position except center and right guard. After a painful year of learning against the likes of Reggie White and Charles Mann, Wolf will challenge Robbins at right tackle, which could be Wolf's best position. He's a high-cut guy (6-6, 280) with big, strong arms, good quickness and the kind of striking ability befitting a run-side tackle. Some scouts feel he has All-Pro tools if he can become more consistent.

Mike Zandofsky, a third-round pick a year ago, has tremendous strength and explosion and will back up at guard. Stiff and bunched-up, he has marginal footwork and doesn't run well.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.0**

QUARTERBACK

Sore-armed Gary Hogeboom is slated for a relief role. Third-year pro Tom Tupa threw six interceptions against Philadelphia in his first career start. Second-year pro Timm Rosenbach played only three quarters. Lomax is gone, but the adventure continues.

Tupa, 6-4, 220 pounds, is an intriguing, if not promising, project — if you've got the time. He might be the team's best athlete and can wing it 70 yards, but he also gives new meaning to "inexperience" — starting but one year at Ohio State before being drafted, primarily as a punter. It showed in Philadelphia last season, when he lost his poise (in and out of the huddle), failed to read the defense (or look off a receiver) and succumbed to wave after blitzing wave. For the season, he wound up with only three touchdown passes and nine interceptions. Despite decent mechanics and a fair touch, he's got a long way to go and a short time to get there.

Rosenbach has shoddy throwing mechanics, short-arms his passes and surprised scouts by hanging the deep ball. Not helped by his late arrival to training camp, nor by Stallings, Rosenbach went from cocky to unsure. He's mobile, throws well on the run and was a productive, improvising player in a college offense suited to his talents. In brief action with the Cards, he showed signs of moving the team. The jury is out.

Shoulder and elbow injuries have robbed what used to be a strong-armed thrower in Hogeboom. Despite completing 56 percent of his passes, last year's 14/19 TD-to-interception ratio and 69.5 rating didn't portray a consistent, winning quarterback. He threw for 562 yards and five touchdowns in the first two games, then was intercepted four times in his first eight passes in Game 3. He has good leadership, poise and prepares well — certainly Tupa and Rosenbach can learn a lot from him — but with his sapped arm strength, his best role is pinch-hitter and teacher.

GRADE (max. 10): **3.5**

RUNNING BACKS

For the first time since 1974, no Cardinals running back rushed for 100 yards in a game. Phoenix ran for only 1,361 yards, less than KC's Christian Okoye and Detroit's Barry Sanders. The Cards tied with

Miami for the NFL's worst rushing average (3.3) and ran for only 10 TDs, a total surpassed by six running backs and 23 teams.

Hold on, it gets worse. Earl Ferrell, the club's best back and an ideal fit for Bugel's new one-back offense, ran into more drug problems and "retired" in the offseason. With Ferrell out, and his longtime backfield partner, Stump Mitchell, suffering what originally appeared to be a career-ending knee injury in Game 3 last year, look for the Cards front office to pound the NFL pavement.

Mitchell, a 10-year veteran, is a slashing runner with great in-line quickness. His forte was the cutback, but now it's the comeback that matters. If Mitchell is ineffective, that leaves Tony Jordan, a 1988 fifth-rounder whose rookie preseason performance drew comparisons to Ottis Anderson's rare combination of size and speed. Jordan is big (6-2, 220), straight-line fast (4.53) and has decent hands, but just hasn't developed. He's not elusive and waits too long to turn upfield. His tentativeness got him benched last season, and he's certainly a longshot to step up and be the Cards' main man this season.

The biggest surprise last year was the play of Vai Sikahema, a special teams performer who carried the ball for the first time since 1986. Forced into action, the 5-9, 184-pounder relied on hustle and craftiness to find the open cracks as a receiver. He wound up catching 23 passes for 245 yards (10.3). Still, he's a bad combination of small and slow, and a third-down specialist at best.

Fullback Lydell Carr is a big, bruising runner who can't stay healthy. He hasn't carried the ball his first two pro seasons because of injuries. Fullback Ron Wolfley is a crushing blocker and short-yardage runner.

GRADE (max. 10): **3.0**

DEFENSIVE LINE If you were an unemployed defensive lineman last year, the Cardinals probably called. Injuries forced the team to use 10 different combinations, five in the first five weeks. Ends Freddie Joe Nunn and David Galloway, the two best linemen, started only five times together.

Nunn, one of the league's best pass rushers at left end, never recovered last season from a four-game suspension for substance abuse. When he returned, he was out of shape and couldn't go a full game. His sack total dropped from 14 to five. He used to rely strictly on great upfield flashes, where he would simply race past tackles. Now he's added an inside body-turn move to keep tackles honest, and it's helped him from being pushed past the pocket as often. Although excellent on stunts, he still needs work on his moves through interior traffic. His vulnerability always has been as a point player against the run. He's much more effective when he stunts and pinches; otherwise, he needs run support from a linebacker.

Galloway, the starting right end, is the most talented of the linemen, and the most brittle. He broke his thumb in the opener, couldn't grab and worried to the point of distraction. For a 6-3, 280-pounder, he has good but not great strength. He won't manhandle blockers, but he's decent at the point and usually gives double-teams all they can handle. He has surprising quickness, good body control and is able to sneak in behind blocks to make plays.

Left tackle Bob Clasby missed 12 games following knee surgery, and Nunn missed his run support. Clasby never gets knocked off the ball and can control blockers, but lacks the quickness to hunt quarterbacks. He'd be a great control tackle if the other tackle were a pass rusher, but such is not the case. Jim Wahler, a fourth-round draft pick a year ago, doesn't have long arms nor the strength for bull rushing. Against the run, he's quick and battles hard but gets stuck to blocks and doesn't change direction well.

Former starter Gary Hadd, weakened by two knee injuries, is a step slow and doesn't hold his ground.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.5**

LINEBACKERS After drafting a linebacker No. 1 four of the previous five years, the Cardinals finally received some dividends in 1989. Left outside linebacker Anthony Bell (No. 1, 1986) had his best season. Right outside linebacker Ken Harvey (No. 1, 1988) became a feared pass rusher. Eric Hill (No. 1, 1989) became the much-needed solid middle linebacker. Although the three finished in the team's top four tacklers, none proved to be big-play makers. They combined for just four forced fumbles and no interceptions, big reasons why the Cardinals had only 27 takeaways, second-fewest in the NFC.

Bell has yet to live up to his college reputation as a big hitter. Despite having all the physical tools, including great speed, he's very methodical and conservative. But last year, he began making plays away from the point of attack. He had 115 tackles, more than double the previous season, and a career-high eight passes defensed. He still gets few sacks (two last year; eight in four seasons) and has the worst hands on the team, with only one career interception.

Harvey is a budding star. He had 42 tackles, seven assists and two sacks in the final four games, and finished with 120 tackles and a club-high seven sacks in his first year as a starter. Much more effective in forward than reverse, Harvey struggles with any kind of pass coverage or straight-read defenses. He has the speed to run with backs in man coverage, but doesn't know how to position himself. He's best in a rush mix with the down group.

Hill started from Day One. Many teams considered him a better outside linebacker prospect, but the Cardinals think his great strength, athletic ability and toughness will translate into a Pro Bowl middle linebacker. They could be right. He sheds blocks well, protects his legs, moves well laterally and has surprising speed for 255 pounds. A physical player with a nasty streak, even his pass drops showed promise. His problem is inexperience in the middle. He didn't play there in college and lacks recognition of offensive plays. Depth behind the three starters is a problem.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.5**

DEFENSIVE BACKS Tim McDonald emerged as the secondary's star in his second season starting at strong safety. Leading the team in tackles for the second consecutive season, McDonald had 35 more stops (155-120) than the next guy; in 1988, he nearly doubled (115-62) the team's second-leading tackler. In 1989, he also had a team-high seven interceptions, the most by a Cardinals player since 1983.

When it comes to run support, McDonald dreams of sweeps. Even pulling guards hate this guy. A strong tackler who can take on the tight ends, McDonald is a rangy athlete in the mold of a Ronnie Lott or Dennis Smith. His aggressiveness begs for play-action passes, but he doesn't often give up big plays.

Free safety Lonnie Young missed six games after suffering a fractured shoulder in the season opener. He is an adept centerfielder with good instincts, anticipation and speed (4.5). He's also a solid hitter and a sure tackler. Poor hands have limited him to six interceptions in five years.

Newcomer Stanley Blair, a Canadian Football League all-star at Edmonton, will battle Carl Carter for the starting right corner spot. Blair is not a burner, but has good bump-and-run technique. In zones, he plants well and can close in a hurry. He also has a cornerback's thick skin, unlike Carter, who frets over getting beat. Not a big hitter, Carter has great speed but plays too passive in man-to-man coverage. He also lacks ball aggressiveness (1 interception last season).

Cedric Mack is coming off his best season, his first at left corner. He doesn't have Carter's catch-up speed, but plays the ball fairly well (4 interceptions) if the action is in front of him. He has the size (6-0, 193), strength and inclination to force the run, and is a good tackler.

Safety backups Michael Zordich and Tracey Eaton, a Plan B free agent from Houston, are fierce hitters but lack speed. At corner, Lorenzo Lynch (Plan B via Chicago) is physical, Jay Taylor fast, and Marcus Turner the size/strength project.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.0**

SPECIAL TEAMS Al Del Greco hit 69 percent of his field goals (18 of 26), the team's best percentage in 15 years, and then was left unprotected. He only missed one kick inside the 40 but was six of 13 from beyond, and didn't register a single touchback last season.

Punter Rich Camarillo led the league with a 43.3-yard average (39.8 net) and earned his second Pro Bowl berth. Sikahema, who has tremendous vision but limited speed, remains one of the NFL's most dangerous punt returners with an 11.7 average. Kickoff coverage was third-worst (20.9) in the NFC; punt coverage third-best (8.1). Wolfley is relentless on coverage and one of the best wedge-busters in the business.

GRADE (max. 10): **7.5**

COACHING/ ORGANIZATION Gene Stallings could be stubborn. He didn't like to delegate authority but seldom accepted blame for mistakes. But you can't blame him for the team's injuries, or accuse his players of quitting. Joe Bugel is much more upbeat. He's a player's coach and the eternal optimist, a prerequisite considering the (lack of) talent he has inherited.

Player personnel director George Boone, who has survived numerous dismal drafts, had his authority stripped by general manager/scout Larry Wilson. Top man Bill Bidwill is well-versed in the art of meddlesome ownership and impatience. (He should have never fired Don Coryell!) Lately, he's been directly responsible for the public relations nightmares this team has endured since arriving in the Valley of the Sun in the spring of 1988. And now he's going to spearhead the club's new marketing effort. Look out.

GRADE (max. 10): **4.0**

DRAFT Surprise! The Cardinals didn't draft a linebacker with their first pick! Instead, they took Thompson, the Heisman Trophy runner-up, after forfeiting their first-round pick by taking Rosenbach in last year's supplemental round. Although Thompson doesn't have great speed (4.7 in the 40), he has tremendous durability, good instincts and is exceptional running between the tackles. With enough burst to beat linebackers to the outside, he should fit in perfectly in Bugel's one-back set.

The Cardinals surprised many when they passed on Michigan wide receiver Greg McMurtry. Proehl is not a burner but runs superb, fearless routes. Davis lacks the height to be a dominating pass rusher but has the strength and lateral quickness to defend the run.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.0**

1990 DRAFT round number (pick in round; overall sequence): 1. USED IN SUP. DRAFT TO PICK TIMM ROSENBACH; 2. (6,31) ANTHONY THOMPSON, RB, Indiana; 3. (5,58) RICKY PROEHL, WR, Wake Forest; 4. (4,85) TRAVIS DAVIS, DT, Michigan State; 5. (6,115) LARRY CENTERS, RB, Stephen F. Austin; 6. (5,142) TYRONE SHAVERS, WR, Lamar; 7. (4,169) JOHNNY JOHNSON, RB, San Jose State; 8. (6,199) MICKEY WASHINGTON, DB, Texas A&M; 9. (5,225) DAVID BAVARO, LB, Syracuse; 10. (4,252) DAVE ELLE, TE, South Dakota; 11. (6,282) DEMPSEY NORMAN, WR, St. Francis (Ill.); 12. (5,308) DONNIE RILEY, RB, Central Michigan; 12. (27,330) KEN McMICHEL, LB, Oklahoma.

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VETERANS ROSTER

NO.	NAME	POS.	HT.	WT.	BIRTH-DATE	COLLEGE	NFL EXP.
80	Awalt, R.	TE	6-5	244	4/9/64	San Diego State	4
44	Baker, T.	RB	5-10	190	6/11/64	East Carolina	4
55	Bell, A.	OLB	6-3	235	7/2/64	Michigan State	5
25	Blair, S.	CB	6-0	190	4/4/64	SE Oklahoma State	1
16	Camarillo, R.	P	5-11	193	11/29/59	Washington	10
45	Carr, L.	FB	6-1	228	5/27/65	Oklahoma	2
41	Carter, C.	CB	5-11	189	3/7/64	Texas Tech	5
79	Clasby, B.	DT	6-5	276	9/28/60	Notre Dame	5
17	Del Greco, A.	K	5-10	198	3/2/62	Auburn	7
21	*Eaton, T.	S	6-1	195	7/19/65	Portland State	3
65	Galloway, D.	DE	6-3	259	2/16/59	Florida	9
81	Green, R.	WR	6-0	194	6/30/57	Henderson State	12
73	Hadd, G.	DT	6-4	278	10/19/65	Minnesota	3
56	Harvey, K.	LB	6-2	230	5/6/65	California	3
58	Hill, E.	LB	6-1	248	11/14/66	Louisiana State	2
5	Hogeboom, G.	QB	6-4	207	8/21/58	Central Michigan	11
83	Holmes, D.	WR	5-10	177	4/1/61	Mesa (Colo.)	5
53	Jax, G.	LB	6-2	229	9/16/63	Florida State	5
86	Jones, E.	WR	5-11	191	12/15/64	Indiana	3
32	Jordan, T.	RB	6-2	220	5/8/65	Kansas State	3
57	Kauahi, K.	C	6-2	270	9/6/59	Hawaii	8
70	Kennard, D.	C	6-3	309	9/9/62	Nevada-Reno	5
52	Kirk, R.	LB	6-2	231	12/27/64	San Diego State	4
51	*Lewis, B.	C	6-7	275	7/12/63	Nebraska	5
29	*Lynch, L.	CB	5-9	199	4/6/63	Cal St. Sacramento	4
47	Mack, C.	CB	6-0	185	9/14/60	Baylor	8
93	Maxwell, V.	LB	6-2	225	10/25/61	Arizona State	7
46	McDonald, T.	SS	6-2	209	1/6/65	Southern Cal	4
54	McKenzie, R.	LB	6-1	242	2/8/63	Tennessee	5
30	Mitchell, S.	RB	5-9	194	3/15/59	The Citadel	10
78	Nunn, F.J.	DE	6-4	250	4/9/62	Mississippi	5
89	Reeves, W.	TE	6-3	249	12/15/65	Auburn	2
63	Robbins, T.	T	6-5	307	6/2/58	East Carolina	9
3	Rosenbach, T.	QB	6-2	210	10/27/66	Washington State	2
72	Saddler, R.	DE	6-5	280	9/26/65	Texas A&M	4
67	Sharpe, L.	T	6-4	260	6/16/60	UCLA	9
36	Sikahema, V.	RB	5-9	184	8/29/62	Brigham Young	5
84	Smith, J.T.	WR	6-2	187	10/29/55	North Texas State	13
61	Smith, L.	G	6-2	278	11/1/63	LSU	6
27	Taylor, J.	CB	5-9	170	11/8/67	San Jose State	2
19	Tupa, T.	QB-P	6-4	220	9/6/66	Ohio State	3
23	Turner, M.	DB	6-0	191	1/13/66	UCLA	2
66	Wahler, J.	DT	6-3	268	7/29/66	UCLA	2
60	*Walker, J.	G-T	6-4	289	1/22/63	Memphis State	4
68	Wolf, J.	T-G	6-5	279	12/28/66	Boston College	2
24	Wolfley, R.	FB	6-0	222	10/14/62	West Virginia	6
43	Young, L.	FS	6-1	191	7/18/63	Michigan State	6
62	Zandofsky, M.	G	6-2	285	11/30/65	Washington	2
38	Zordich, M.	FS	5-11	197	10/12/63	Penn State	4

*Plan B free agent

DALLAS COWBOYS

1989 RECORD: 1-15 HEAD COACH: JIMMY JOHNSON STADIUM: TEXAS (65,024)

That blue star on the Dallas helmet should have been changed to a red cross in 1989. After all, Texas Stadium certainly qualified as a disaster area. From all indications, relief is not expected soon.

When coach Jimmy Johnson went about dismantling Tom Landry's final team, it's doubtful he realized the pendulum would swing so low in 1989. With rock-bottom now established, any improvement from 1-15 will be greeted as upward, positive motion, an inherent consolation from being so bad in the first place.

Still, Cowboys fans shouldn't expect much to cheer about this season. Despite signing 16 Plan B free agents in the offseason, patching up this rag-tag team is going to take an infusion of talent drawn from quality drafts. If the Cowboys don't hit on their college picks this year and next, better circle the wagons.

WIDE RECEIVERS/ TIGHT END

Dallas hardly looks like a team that drafted a couple of first-round receivers in the last five years. Oft-injured Mike Sherrard (No. 1 in 1986) is now a backup with the 49ers and Michael Irvin (No. 1 in '88) has been limited by ankle, then knee injuries.

Irvin had offseason arthroscopic knee surgery and the Cowboys hope he'll be ready for the start of the season. Before being hurt, he was Dallas' go-to guy with 26 catches in six games. Irvin doesn't have the type of deep speed that makes cornerbacks quiver, but he explodes out of cuts and can bust things open after the catch. He's big (6-2, 202), fearless over the middle and has better-than-average hands. When healthy, he's a prime-time player with a bright future.

With or without Irvin, Plan B acquisition Dennis McKinnon (Chicago) figures to start. McKinnon is much like Irvin — an intermediate-range receiver who works well between the hashmarks. McKinnon operates well out of motion, using a running start to get the jump on cornerbacks. Experienced in complementary routes and opposing coverages, he uncovers well, runs precise patterns and has reliable hands. He's also a killer blocker. Basically a "catch-and-get-down" receiver, he's nevertheless been consistent and productive.

Kelvin Martin became the main man when Irvin went down. He responded by topping Cowboys receivers with 46 catches for 644 yards last year, but like Irvin, hit the IR with a knee injury. He's another Cowboys receiver who lacks great eight- and nine-route speed, relying instead on working the outs and curls. He has good quickness, jumps well and goes after the ball, though he doesn't adjust well on the deep ball. He's a third-receiver type.

James Dixon is the club's best big-play bet. Dixon has more pure speed than any of the other veteran receivers but is shy on instincts for the position. He was moved from running back to wideout in a run-and-shoot college offense at Houston and, consequently, has only a vague idea of pro-style routes and coverages. Although his hands are just adequate, he is very quick and can make an impact, as evidenced by last season's 97-yard kickoff TD return against Kansas City as well as a midseason six-catch, 203-yard performance against Phoenix. He could wind up as a third-down specialist out of the backfield.

Despite a career year in 1989 with 28 catches (second-best on the team), tight end Steve Folsom's strength is in-line blocking. Limited athletically, he comes off the ball well, has good body control and can stay with the linebacker. Keith Jennings is a much better receiver, despite catching just six passes, yet is still adjusting after mostly splitting out wide in college. When the passing game kicks into gear, look for Plan B (Phoenix) importee Jay Novacek to get the call. Invited to the 1984 U.S. Olympic Trials as a decathlete, Novacek is part tight end, part wideout, part running back. He has better-than-average speed and can line up outside in three-wide sets. His elusiveness gives linebackers fits. A good route technician, he has nifty, north-south running instincts after the catch.

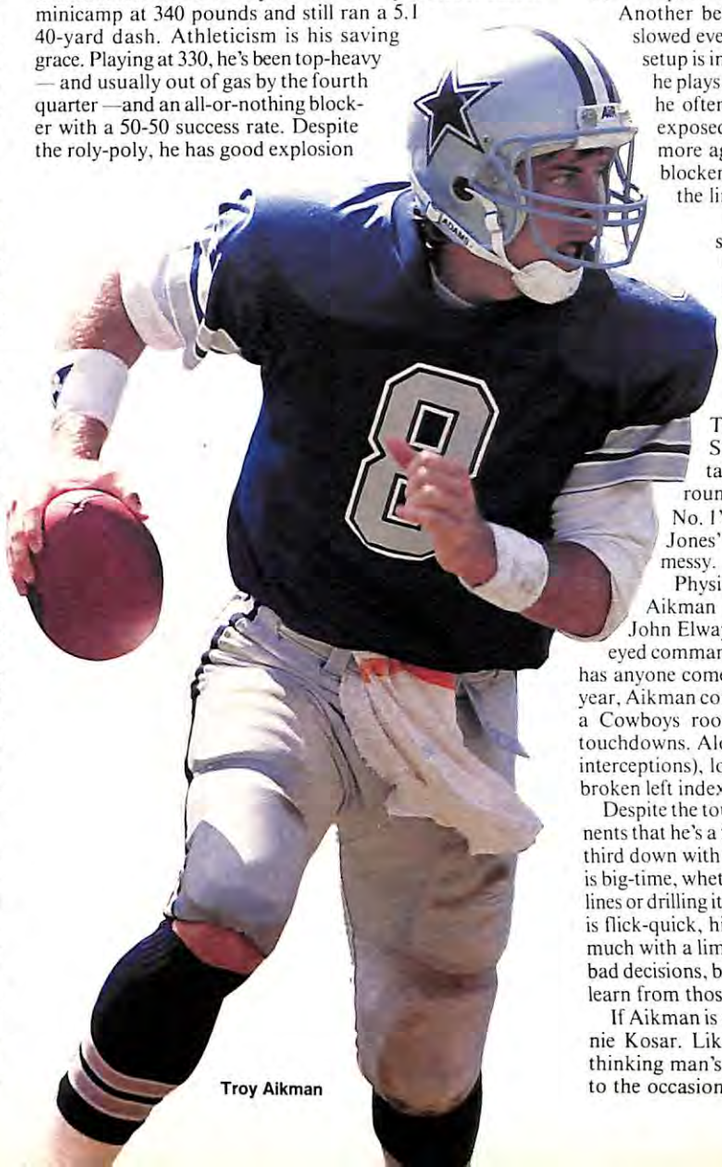
GRADE (max. 10): **5.0**

OFFENSIVE LINE

For having an offensive line that was generally overmatched and overweight, the Cowboys actually tied a team-low, giving up 30 sacks last season. Perhaps it was because the club's rookie quarterbacks were hurrying their way to 27 interceptions. Perhaps it just takes a long time to run around these wide-bodies. The running game (24th) is where help is needed.

Mark Tuinei, at left tackle, had the best year of this bunch. Missing only a handful of plays all season, he was beaten for one sack and whistled for just two penalties. Finally avoiding the injury bug, Tuinei displayed excellent footwork and improved, consistent pass-blocking skills. Tuinei has decent size (6-5, 286) and can overpower people when he locks on. He should be a quality player for years to come.

Left guard Nate Newton, who the Cowboys would like to compete for one of the tackle spots, is obviously more interested in the dinner bowl than the Pro Bowl. A major frustration for the Cowboys, he showed up at an offseason minicamp at 340 pounds and still ran a 5.1 40-yard dash. Athleticism is his saving grace. Playing at 330, he's been top-heavy — and usually out of gas by the fourth quarter —and an all-or-nothing blocker with a 50-50 success rate. Despite the roly-poly, he has good explosion and sustains well. Another giant, Jeff Zimmerman (6-3, 313) is very limited in space and a prime target of speed rushers.



Troy Aikman

Competing at center will be Plan B (Rams) veteran Tony Slaton and second-year man Mark Stepnoski. Stepnoski has a slight edge in strength and quickness; both have outstanding technique. As a pass blocker, the squatty Stepnoski gets into a classic, low-base stance and slides well. He's a little small for a new-age offensive lineman (6-2, 269) but has good leg drive and enough upper-body bulk and hand/arm strength to play the middle, though he tends to bite too hard on initial moves and overextend. Slaton has a history of knee problems and his move from grass to the artificial surface of Texas Stadium concerns some. Starting 15 games at guard for the Rams last year, Slaton is a pear-shaped finesse player with sound fundamentals.

Crawford Ker, the 'Pokes most consistent lineman over the 42 straight games he appeared in, slipped in 1989. After showing steady improvement with his general footwork and in-line agility, the right guard's natural stiffness resurfaced and quicker defensive tackles gave him headaches. A solid, tough drive blocker at nearly 300 pounds, his limitations in space mandate he play inside where he gets help.

Another behemoth, 310-pound Kevin Gogan, was slowed even more by a foot injury last year. His pass setup is in perpetual slow motion, and like Newton, he plays top-heavy and off-balance. At right tackle he often gets help from the tight end, but when exposed, he simply doesn't have the feet to mirror more agile athletes. He can be a formidable run blocker, but he's basically a plodder and probably the line's weakest link.

Deep-snapper Dave Widell is versatile, strong and stiff. Tackle Louis Cheek (Plan B, Miami) can protect the passer but won't help the running game.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.0**

QUARTERBACK

The youthful, talent-rich Cowboys quarterback situation is not entirely enviable. In selecting Troy Aikman in the 1989 regular draft and Steve Walsh in the subsequent supplemental draft (which cost Dallas a 1990 first-round pick), the Cowboys spent consecutive No. 1's for the same spot on the field. Aikman is Jones' man, but if Walsh stays, things could get messy.

Physically and stylistically, the 6-4, 216-pound Aikman is somewhat reminiscent of the young John Elway — great arm, superb mobility, a steely-eyed command of the huddle. Perhaps not since Elway has anyone come out of college with as many tools. Last year, Aikman completed 52.9 percent of his 293 passes for a Cowboys rookie record 1,749 yards, including nine touchdowns. Along the way, Aikman took his lumps (18 interceptions), losing all 11 of his starts while suffering a broken left index finger that shelved him for five contests.

Despite the tough times, Aikman convinced most opponents that he's a future star. He consistently hurt teams on third down with his rushing (302 yards, 7.9 avg.). His arm is big-time, whether it's rocketing one deep down the sidelines or drilling it between converging defenders. His release is flick-quick, his field vision excellent. Trying to do too much with a limited supporting cast frequently produced bad decisions, but he has the intelligence and toughness to learn from those inevitable rookie mistakes.

If Aikman is a future Elway, then Walsh is the next Bernie Kosar. Like his fellow Miami alumnus, Walsh is a thinking man's quarterback who customizes his delivery to the occasion. He has more touch than Aikman and a

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better sense of the short game. He makes good pre-snap reads, knows where his receivers are, and for a rookie behind a very suspect line, did a good job defeating the blitz. Walsh doesn't possess Aikman's arm strength, nor his quick feet, but can sidestep the rush. Walsh completed 110 of 219 for 1,371 yards and five TDs (nine interceptions).

Babe Laufenberg, the journeyman/stand-up comic, has a wit much quicker than his release.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.0**

RUNNING BACKS Nowhere is the Cowboys fall from NFL grace more apparent than at running back. The 'Pokes protected just one ballcarrier (fullback Daryl Johnston) and let last year's leading ground gainer, Paul Palmer, go to Cincinnati via Plan B.

Johnston is a plodding, north-south runner with good forward lean and low shoulders. At 6-2, 237, he can bang between the tackles and bounce from hits, but has little or no ability to run wide. Far worse, he tends to fumble. A strong blocker with limited receiving skills, he's still a promising player entering just his second season.

Dallas imported Keith Jones (Plan B, Cleveland) and Terrence Flagler (trade, San Francisco) to fill the hole at tailback. Jones is fast and elusive but not particularly big (5-10, 180). He likes to get an angle and use his burst to hit outside. He has good hands but, unlike Flagler, doesn't figure as an every-down back. Flagler (6-0, 200) is a slasher with 4.5 speed. He does most of his work between the tackles, has good vision and brings a big-play dimension.

Tommie Agee (Plan B, Kansas City) is a solid blocker, either as the lead man or on blitz pickup. Junior Tautalatasi is a situational back with excellent hands and some open-field instincts. **GRADE** (max. 10): **3.0**

DEFENSIVE LINE The Cowboys line used to play the "flex"; now it's just in a state of flux. After finishing with an NFC-low 29 sacks, there are depth chart battles all along the front four. The Cowboys would like to have former tackle and No. 1 pick Danny Noonan, hurt for most of 1989, move permanently to end. He has the most natural ability on the defensive line, and the most trouble sustaining his weight and endurance. Noonan's size (265-275), superior burst and upfield speed make more sense at end.

Jim Jeffcoat is not as effective as he was when Randy White was drawing the double-teams, but the seven-year veteran was the star of this group. He was tops on the defensive line in downs played, sacks (11½), tackles (100) and recovered fumbles (3). Still an intense competitor, Jeffcoat relies on quickness and fits well with the Cowboys' new attacking style. He gets into blockers quickly, and uses more battle than beef to play the run.

Tony Tolbert is a tall, lean converted linebacker who at 6-6, 241, has impressive physical potential. Right now, he spends most of his time getting chop-blocked, caught up in hand-fighting or just plain being stuffed at the point. But his excellent feet, swim move and upfield charge are too good to ignore. Tolbert needs more time — and weight — to play from a down position. Not surprisingly, he's better chasing plays away from him.

Inside, the Cowboys started Willie Broughton and former Redskins Dean Hamel, a pair of capable run defenders. Hamel had a fine season considering he missed most of training camp before being traded to Dallas. Despite the late start, he played 80 percent of the defensive downs (second only to Jeffcoat on the line) and was a low-based, effective run-stuffer. Broughton was seeing his first extensive playing time after missing most of two seasons and was a functional lane-clogger. Although he has some athletic ability, he has little quickness. Neither will deter many QBs from stepping up in the pocket.

Dallas hopes defensive end Danny Stubbs, who came in a trade with the 49ers, or linebacker Walter Johnson (Plan B, New Orleans) will develop into a pass-rushing specialist. Johnson is a bowling-ball 6-0 and 240 who, with a speed move added to his great leverage and balance, could become a wrecking ball. When not overweight, Stubbs has great speed and acceleration upfield. He has strong, long arms and good rip and swim techniques. After 15 years, Ed "Too Tall" Jones was released.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.5**

LINEBACKERS If a team that went 1-15 can have a strength, here it is. Middle linebacker Eugene Lockhart posted a mind-boggling, team-record and NFL-high 222 total tackles, and added two sacks, two interceptions and eight passes defensed. Johnson's scheme does call for traffic to be funneled to the middle, but it was Lockhart's radar and relentless pursuit that finished the job. Equally effective at the point, Lockhart is a tough, physical, inside-out defender who hits anything that moves. As a coverage linebacker, he lacks great instincts but has enough mobility to go hashmark-to-hashmark in the short zones.

On the weak side, Ken Norton has an imposing physique but lacks fluid, instinctive moves. He has good (4.6) straight-away speed and is a fair blitzer coming off the right side, but struggles against the run and has been criticized for not sticking his nose in the pile. Pushing him will be Jesse Solomon, who split time after arriving from Minnesota in the Herschel Walker trade. He's the best cover linebacker in the Cowboys lineup, with good speed and super turn-and-chase ability. He'll run with backs downfield all day long. He's a quality player, and in 1987 and '88 led the Vikings in solo tackles.

In the Dallas defense, the strongside linebacker stays at home. Jack Del Rio, an intense and savvy veteran, is at his best taking the run head-on. He's never been good in space and plays stiff. Once David Howard, another Minnesota acquisition, learns the Cowboys system, don't be surprised if he wins the job. Howard is much more complete. He knows how to shed blockers, protect his legs and string out the run, and is very fluid in pass coverage. He can blitz, too. **GRADE** (max. 10): **6.0**

DEFENSIVE BACKS The Cowboys starting secondary accounted for just three interceptions last year as the Dallas pass defense ranked next-to-last in the NFL in yards allowed. Needless to say, just about every job is up for grabs.

At left corner, former Viking Issiac Holt seems to have the inside track on incumbent Manny Hendrix. Holt, a five-year veteran, has a smooth backpedal and loose hips. He has the tools for one-on-one coverage and is an excellent route-reader. At 6-2, 202, he also has above-average pop for a corner. Hendrix may be the better athlete (4.4 speed, great leaping ability) but doesn't read well. Whenever he was used in the nickel, the opposition always found him.

On the right corner, Robert Williams (a free agent in '87) may replace Baylor teammate Ron Francis (a second-round pick the same year). Williams is fast enough, but gives receivers too much cushion, doesn't press well and has horrible hands. Francis has never measured up to his big-hitter reputation in college. At 5-9 and 186, he often gets to the spot but rarely makes the play.

Strong safety Vince Albritton (6-2, 214) is a physical player — perhaps too physical. He plays without much flexibility or quickness. A former linebacker in the nickel, he plays the run well but doesn't arrive in time to break up many passes. Albritton will be challenged by Antonio Gibson, a Plan B addition from New Orleans. Gibson has size, toughness and more athletic and coverage ability than Albritton.

At free safety, Ray Horton and James Washington (Plan B, Rams) will lock horns. Horton is a converted corner who is on the small side (5-11, 187) for a safety. He closes well but is better in zone coverages and needs to be shielded from mismatches against bigger wide receivers. Washington is a rangy, often overaggressive player with a good size/speed ratio. **GRADE** (max. 10): **4.0**

SPECIAL TEAMS This was one of the few areas in which the Cowboys were competitive. Veteran punter Mike Saxon averaged 40.9 (34.3 net) while kicker Luis Zendejas hit five of nine field goals after joining the Cowboys in the 10th week. Zendejas is streaky but has a strong leg.

Derrick Shepard handled most of the punt returns and had a so-so year (6.7 average), while James Dixon (25.1) helped the 'Pokes to the NFL's second-best kickoff return average (22.2). The influx of Plan B talent (i.e. Tommie Agee, Walter Johnson) should help coverage teams, which are still led by hard-hitting Bill Bates.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.0**

COACHING/ ORGANIZATION Everyone re-hashes the re-making of the Cowboys. There's a feeling around the league that Jimmy Johnson has not adapted to the pro game after a successful college career. Even his organizational skills came under scrutiny when his club showed up unprepared for last year's (short-week) Thanksgiving Day game against Philadelphia. Yet, Johnson is an intense, committed football man and wouldn't be the first successful NFL head coach who's had to suffer through some down seasons first.

There's little doubt of owner Jerry Jones' commitment, or the size of his wallet. He spent $1,030,000, second-biggest buying spree in the NFL, for a league-high 16 Plan B players, had the guts to make the blockbuster Herschel Walker deal and brought in more quality players (Flagler, Stubbs) via trades. One offseason move that may have hurt was quarterback coach Jerry Rhome's departure for Phoenix. Rhome, who was hired under Tom Landry just prior to the Dallas purge, had developed a solid rapport with Aikman. Now it's up to offensive coordinator David Shula to do the same. **GRADE** (max. 10): **5.0**

DRAFT The Cowboys reinforced the notion that Johnson has a lot to learn about the NFL. In signing 13 free agents and 16 Plan B'ers, the Cowboys went into the draft very close to the 80-man roster limit, thus limiting themselves in the college lottery. Consequently, they traded five middle and late picks for a fifth-round defensive back, Stan Smagala, and also sent a handful of mid-rounders to San Diego for a 1991 third-round pick. In the end, the Cowboys — who had 14 choices going into the draft — got just six players, including Smagala, a speedy running back (4.35) converted to corner. Almost in spite of themselves, the Cowboys got help in some key areas.

Dallas would have had the draft's top pick if not for selecting quarterback Steve Walsh in last year's supplemental first round. Instead, the Cowboys got in Smith a tough, instinctive runner more likely to stretch short gains into first downs than touchdowns. Wright is a big-time blazer with multiple gears and improving hands. If he learns to read coverages and improve his routes, he could be a factor soon. **GRADE** (max. 10): **5.5**

1990 DRAFT round number (pick in round; overall sequence): 1. USED IN SUP. DRAFT TO PICK STEVE WALSH; 1. (19,17) EMMITT SMITH, RB, Florida; 2. (1,26) ALEXANDER WRIGHT, WR, Auburn; 3. (10,64) JIMMIE JONES, DT, Miami; 9. (1,221) KENNETH GANT, DB, Albany State; 11. (1,277) DAVE HARPER, LB, Humboldt State; 12. USED IN SUP. DRAFT TO PICK MIKE LOWMAN.

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VETERANS ROSTER

NO.	NAME	POS.	HT.	WT.	BIRTH-DATE	COLLEGE	NFL EXP.
30	*Agee, T.	RB	6-0	218	2/22/64	Auburn	3
8	Aikman, T.	QB	6-4	216	11/21/66	UCLA	2
36	Albritton, V.	S	6-2	214	7/23/62	Washington	7
40	Bates, B.	S	6-1	199	6/6/61	Tennessee	8
79	Broughton, W.	DT	6-5	275	9/9/64	Miami (Fla.)	4
72	*Cheek, L.	T	6-6	295	10/6/64	Texas A&M	3
55	Del Rio, J.	LB	6-4	236	4/4/63	Southern Cal	6
86	Dixon, J.	WR	5-10	181	2/2/67	Houston	2
32	Flagler, T.	RB	6-0	200	9/24/64	Clemson	4
89	Folsom, S.	TE	6-5	240	3/21/58	Utah	6
38	Francis, R.	CB	5-9	186	4/7/64	Baylor	4
21	*Gibson, A.	S	6-3	202	7/5/62	Cincinnati	5
66	Gogan, K.	T	6-7	309	11/2/64	Washington	4
60	Hamel, D.	DT	6-3	276	7/7/61	Tulsa	6
45	Hendrix, M.	CB	5-10	186	10/20/64	Utah	5
30	Holt, I.	CB	6-2	204	10/4/62	Alcorn State	6
20	Horton, R.	S	5-11	187	4/12/60	Washington	8
99	Howard, D.	LB	6-2	230	12/8/61	Long Beach St.	6
88	Irvin, M.	WR	6-2	202	3/5/66	Miami (Fla.)	3
77	Jeffcoat, J.	DE	6-5	256	4/1/61	Arizona State	8
84	Jennings, K	TE	6-4	251	5/19/66	Clemson	2
91	*Johnson, W.	LB	6-0	240	11/13/63	Louisiana Tech	4
48	Johnston, D	FB	6-2	234	2/10/66	Syracuse	2
31	*Jones, K.	RB	5-10	182	2/5/66	Nebraska	2
68	Ker, C.	G	6-3	285	5/5/62	Florida	6
15	Laufenberg, B.	QB	6-3	203	12/5/59	Indiana	5
56	Lockhart, E.	LB	6-2	233	3/8/61	Houston	7
83	Martin, K	WR	5-9	162	5/14/65	Boston College	4
85	*McKinnon, D	WR	6-1	185	8/22/61	Florida State	7
61	Newton, N.	G	6-3	318	12/20/61	Florida A&M	5
73	Noonan, D.	DL	6-4	270	7/14/65	Nebraska	4
51	Norton, K	LB	6-2	234	9/29/66	UCLA	3
82	*Novacek, J.	TE	6-4	235	10/24/62	Wyoming	6
4	Saxon, M	P	6-3	198	7/10/62	San Diego State	6
87	Shepard, D	WR	5-10	187	1/22/64	Oklahoma	3
65	*Slaton, T.	C-G	6-3	280	4/12/61	Southern Cal	7
57	*Smith, V.	LB	6-2	230	7/3/65	East Carolina	2
54	Solomon, J.	LB	6-0	235	11/4/63	Florida State	5
70	Stepnoski, M.	C-G	6-2	269	1/20/67	Pittsburgh	2
96	Stubbs, D.	DE	6-4	260	1/3/65	Miami (Fla.)	3
25	Tautalatasi, J	RB	5-11	208	3/24/63	Washington State	5
92	Tolbert, T.	DE	6-6	241	12/29/67	Texas-El Paso	2
71	Tunei, M.	T	6-5	286	3/31/60	Hawaii	8
	Walen, M.	DT	6-5	267	3/10/63	UCLA	3
3	Walsh, S.	QB	6-2	200	12/1/66	Miami (Fla.)	2
37	*Washington, J.	S	6-1	196	1/10/65	UCLA	3
78	Widell, D.	T	6-6	292	5/14/65	Boston College	3
23	Williams, R	CB	5-10	184	10/2/62	Baylor	4
98	Wills, M.	DL	6-8	285	3/16/62	SMU	5
6	Zendejas, L.	K	5-9	179	10/22/61	Arizona State	4
76	Zimmerman, J.	G	6-3	313	1/10/65	Florida	4

*Plan B free agent

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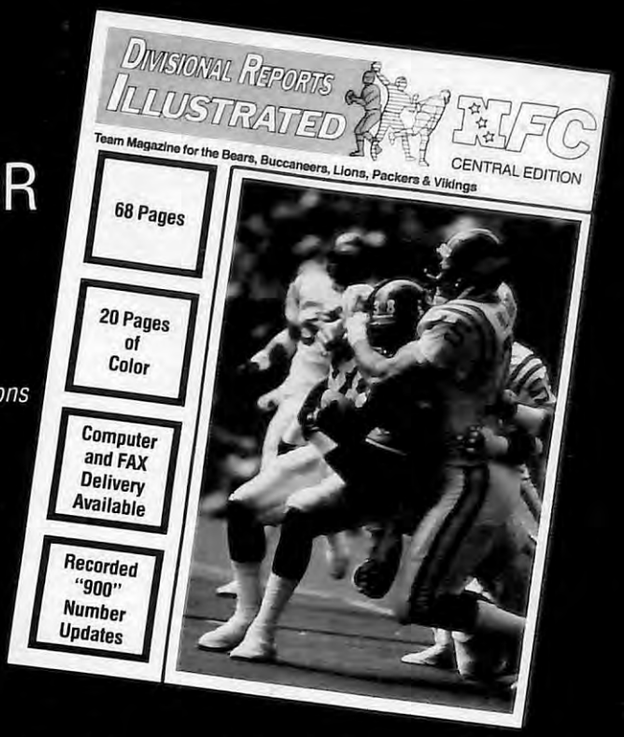

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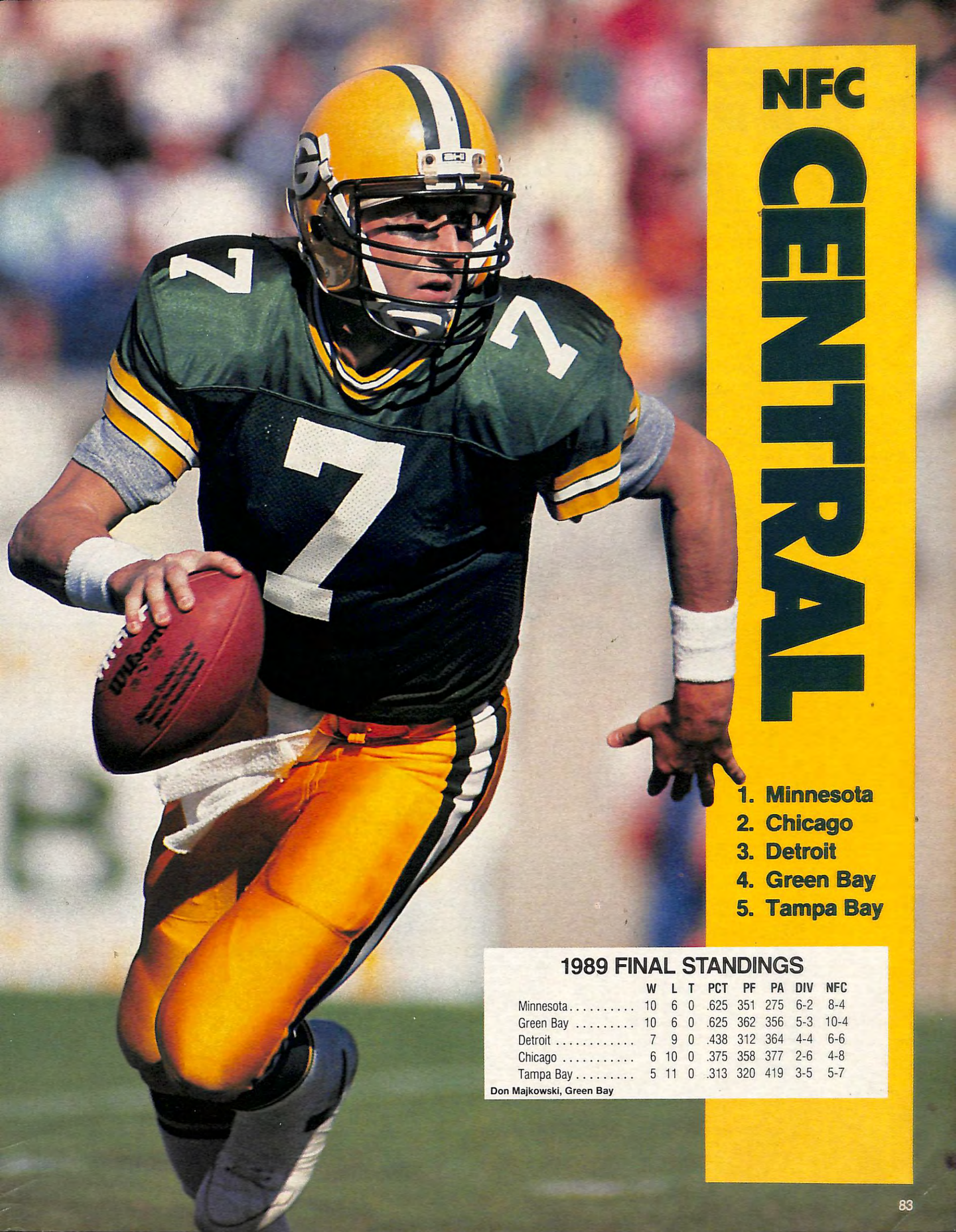

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2. Chicago
3. Detroit
4. Green Bay
5. Tampa Bay

1989 FINAL STANDINGS

	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA	DIV	NFC
Minnesota	10	6	0	.625	351	275	6-2	8-4
Green Bay	10	6	0	.625	362	356	5-3	10-4
Detroit	7	9	0	.438	312	364	4-4	6-6
Chicago	6	10	0	.375	358	377	2-6	4-8
Tampa Bay	5	11	0	.313	320	419	3-5	5-7

Don Majkowski, Green Bay

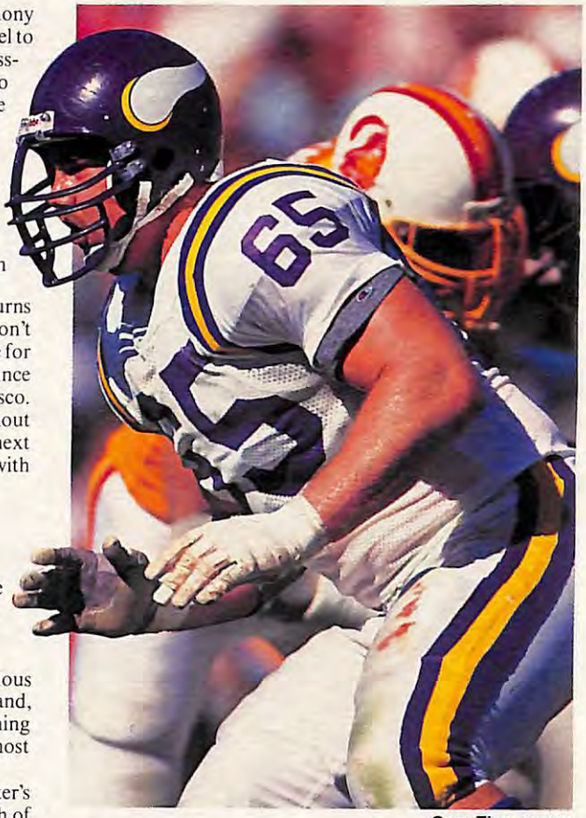
MINNESOTA VIKINGS

1989 RECORD: 10-6 HEAD COACH: JERRY BURNS STADIUM: HUBERT H. HUMPHREY METRODOME (63,000)

Is it possible for the Minnesota Vikings to find harmony in 1990? The Vikings have more than enough personnel to repeat as champions of the NFC Central, but if the fussing and feuding that racked this franchise a year ago persist, the Vikings are destined to become one of the most talented teams never to play in the Super Bowl.

Let's see. The players don't trust management. Management blames the players. Bitter contract battles happen every year. The coach isn't a strong personality. The players have little leadership and even less respect for the law. And the overly expectant fans are prepared to boo the whole operation at the first sign of trouble.

General manager Mike Lynn and coach Jerry Burns don't need to be reminded that better days probably won't be on the horizon. The Vikings mortgaged their future for Herschel Walker, then won their first division title since 1980 before losing 41-13 in the playoffs to San Francisco. They have impact players sprinkled liberally throughout the lineup, but almost no chance to add talent in the next three drafts. The Vikings had better start this decade with authority because the rest of it could be a downer.



Gary Zimmerman

WIDE RECEIVERS/ TIGHT END

The divisiveness that affected the Vikings as a whole really did a number on wide receiver Anthony Carter and tight end Steve Jordan. Carter caught 65 passes and Jordan went to his fourth consecutive Pro Bowl, but neither played well by previous standards. Both reported late after contract disputes and, as is often the case with players AWOL from training camp, both were bothered by nagging injuries almost all season.

Hamstring and ankle injuries really impeded Carter's ability to get open. He wasn't able to practice for much of the year and seemed to lack stamina. His average per catch (16.4) and touchdowns (4) were career lows. Sure-handed and remarkably elusive in the open field, Carter isn't a burner but possesses a late burst to the ball. He is most dangerous inside, particularly on the quick post. Neither he nor Hassan Jones hears footsteps. And Carter can take a huge hit and hang onto the ball; he has just three fumbles in 281 career possessions.

Jones has superior hand-eye coordination which enables him to lead the league in highlight-film catches. His hands may be even better than Carter's and he has long, long arms. Jones is a more disciplined route runner than Carter and doesn't miss many adjustments. If he makes a mistake, it doesn't haunt him. With just average speed, Jones uses guile, not gas, to get behind defenders.

There is a critical need for young flash at wide receiver, and the Vikings did add three fleetfoots via Plan B — Ira Hillary (Cincinnati), Cornell Burbage (Dallas) and Andy Schillinger (Phoenix). Jim Gustafson, the leading backup, is an overachiever who sticks to the short and intermediate zones, but he isn't dynamic enough to be a full-time player.

Although just 29, Jordan enters his ninth pro season. After missing two-a-day drills a year ago, he suffered a sprained ankle and then played hurt. His average per catch (14.5) remained extremely high among tight ends, but his production (35 catches) dipped noticeably from 57 in 1988. Jordan can do it all: block well, catch everything, get deep. In the playoff debacle against San Francisco, he was about all the Vikings had. On a team with a void in leadership, Jordan may be the closest thing to a leader on offense.

Darryl Ingram, like Jordan, is extremely bright. As a fourth-round pick, the Vikings hope he tends more to the business at hand and develops grittiness as a blocker. He runs on his tip-toes and, at 225, lacks a firm base, but he can run and catch. **GRADE** (max. 10): **7.5**

OFFENSIVE LINE

Individual talent and reputation don't always translate into overall production; look no further than the Vikings' offensive line for proof. Despite those formidable up-front bodies, Minnesota hasn't ranked in the top half of the league in percentage of sacks allowed since 1985. Last year the Vikings were 17th, fourth-best in the NFC Central. And they haven't been a dominant rushing team for years.

First priority on this year's agenda is a return to form by center Kirk Lowdermilk, whose '89 season was disappointing and puzzling. For one thing, he had seven holding penalties, four more than the next offensive lineman. He lost too many battles with physical nose tackles. A former collegiate wrestler, Lowdermilk mirrors well in pass protection and snaps back when beaten. But he still spent too much time on the ground last year.

Gary Zimmerman is a premier player, as complete a left tackle as former Viking Ron Yary. He went to his third straight Pro Bowl in '89. Though he isn't mammoth (285) or exceptionally strong, Zimmerman is an effective run blocker who strikes quickly and maintains good position. What separates him from others is his consistent pass blocking against the best rushers in the league. Zimmerman has great hands, feet and body control, plus he's a sound technician who works at his game.

The only thing right tackle Tim Irwin has in common with Zimmerman is a solid work ethic. Irwin is neither a good athlete nor smooth technician. He compensates for his limitations with size, (6-7½, 285) strength and a killer instinct. As a run blocker, Irwin is a load straight-ahead. He can't pull and is totally lost in space. Irwin does his best work in pass protection when matched against power players. The quick upfield rushers race around him. Irwin has started 117 consecutive games, but at age 31, appears to be slipping.

In Randall McDaniel and Todd Kalis, a pair of third-year men from Arizona State, the Vikings feel they're set at guard for years. McDaniel is somewhat undersized (6-3, 270), but has as much athletic ability, speed and natural strength as virtually any guard in the league, enabling him to deliver thunderous blocks in the team's trap-oriented running game. McDaniel is a solid pass blocker, too. His reward was a berth in the Pro Bowl. Kalis is a massive guard (6-5, 285) who graded out on a par with McDaniel's '88 campaign. He struggled early before closing with some aggressive outings. Kalis is a mauler and pusher, rather than a striker. At this point, he has better luck with running plays than passes. When he learns to make adjustments on the fly, his pass protection should pick up.

Technician Craig Wolfley, a starter at Pittsburgh since 1981, was signed during Plan B to add much-needed depth and versatility. **GRADE** (max. 10): **7.0**

QUARTERBACK

The Vikings are hoping the 1988 Wade Wilson shows up for 1990. The problem wasn't so much what Wilson did last year, or his $1 million base salary, as what he didn't do. Detroit's Bob Gagliano was the only NFL starting quarterback to throw fewer touchdown passes than Wilson, who had nine. Of the Vikings' 55 possessions inside the 20, Minnesota managed a mere 24 touchdowns. Wilson was indecisive in the red zone — hesitating, throwing off-target or making a faulty read.

Wilson is bright enough, but has never been hailed as a student of the game. Wilson's 53.6 percent completion mark, down from a league-leading 61.4 percent in 1988, can be best explained by his continued difficulties in reading coverages. He also had trouble coping with the blunt criticisms of offensive coordinator Bob Schnelker. The pair's season-long feud represented some of the Vikes' best action of the season.

There doesn't seem to be as much spontaneity in Wilson's play, either. A natural runner with fine speed, Wilson started just seven games in '87 but still found opportunity to run for 263 yards and five touchdowns. In 24 starts the past two years, he has rushed for only 268 yards and three touchdowns. It's baffling. Some games he runs, some games he doesn't. His hesitancy to bring the ball down and take off has cost the Vikings several touchdowns. There is nothing wrong with his arm. He can throw all the passes.

Rich Gannon replaces the released Tommy Kramer as the No. 2 quarterback. He has 4.6 speed, a decent arm and desired height (6-3). At this stage, Gannon doesn't see the entire field and is prone to bad reads. Yet, if the Vikings are patient, he has the raw material to develop.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.5**

RUNNING BACKS

Last season, the Vikes gave away the ranch for Herschel Walker and discovered their running game was only marginally better. If that much. The Vikings wound up seventh in rushing and 14th in total offense.

Tom Moore, who spent the past 13 seasons implementing Chuck Noll's trapping schemes in Pittsburgh, will be charged with trying to fit a square peg in a round hole. Walker runs best out of the I-formation, the Vikings run a split-back. If Walker can get his shoulders square and into a hole, he will either drag a defender 10 yards downfield or go the distance. Straight ahead, Walker performs like a bowling ball pushed off the Empire State Building. However, he has a hard time changing direction and isn't able to take advantage of cutback lanes. String him out for even a second and you've won the battle.

What really concerned the Vikings were the other parts of Walker's game. He didn't have much understanding of pass blocking and wasn't that thrilled to learn. As a re-

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ceiver, he displayed soft hands but was slow to pick up the routes. He looked stiff in the upper body and didn't adjust well to balls that weren't perfectly thrown. Actually, D.J. Dozier runs routes as well as Walker, if not better, and probably is more elusive in space. Dozier was no more productive in his third season than he was in his first two, but at least he gave better effort.

As unsettled as halfback is, the Vikings feel great about the Rick Fenney-Alfred Anderson tandem at fullback. Fenney is a 240-pound battering ram with some wiggle and cutback ability on tosses. He is more of a natural receiver than Anderson, who has overcome his receiving shortcomings through repetition. Both block well for run and pass. Anderson has better top-end speed but doesn't get off the mark any quicker. **GRADE** (max. 10): **7.5**

DEFENSIVE LINE Facing the Vikings' pass rush last season was like trying to fend off a purple avalanche. Defensive coordinator Floyd Peters knows only one style of line play: Damn the run, full speed ahead. Every play, every day. The result was 71 sacks, one short of the NFL record set by Chicago in 1984.

Right tackle Keith Millard and right end Chris Doleman were the most feared defensive players in the league. Millard had 18 sacks and was named the NFL's Most Valuable Defensive Player; Doleman led the league with 21 sacks, while adding five forced fumbles and five fumble recoveries. As magnificent as they are physically and statistically, something is missing. Millard and Doleman have a not-so-friendly competition going. Their selfish rivalry has to be an obstacle in attempts to unify the team.

Millard might be as quick off the ball as any defensive lineman to play the game. Many of his sacks occur because blockers are late in reacting. Once Millard gets an arm over, forget it. He bolts forward like an enraged bull and then chases quarterbacks all over the field. Although outweighed by virtually every offensive lineman he lines up against, Millard (262) is able to throw blockers because of his body strength. The emotional Millard jumps offsides too much and is susceptible to trap blocks, but it's a small price to pay for delivering suffocating pressure play after play.

Doleman has fewer worries about the run because he lines up so wide in the Vikings' 4-3 defense. Although in need of better awareness of run-blocking combinations, he increased his solo tackles from 42 to 68 last season. As an upfield pass rusher, nobody does it better. Doleman has good strength, but most of his pressure is based on movement and speed. He beats tackles to the corner, then outruns them to the quarterback. When tackles cheat outside, he goes to crisp secondary moves to the inside. Doleman, who has an uncanny knack of whacking the ball loose, has caused 15 fumbles in four years.

Henry Thomas, who functions almost as a nose tackle, is a selfless player who tries his best to hold the unit together. His 1989 accomplishments listed nine sacks, 68 solo tackles, three fumbles forced and three fumbles recovered. Thomas operates from a strong base, shows athletic ability on the inside pass rush and always plays the right defense.

Al Noga took over for Doug Martin at left end and contributed 11½ sacks. He does one thing: Take off and go. He will embarrass slower right tackles with his quickness and unreal intensity, but against more athletic types, the short-armed Noga is stymied. If he weren't such a pass-rush force, the Vikings couldn't afford to start him. At 6-1 and 260, he gets clobbered by the strongside running games. Thomas Strauthers was the only other defensive lineman protected. He plays inside and outside, is best against the run but shows some pass rush.

GRADE (max. 10): **9.0**

LINEBACKERS Mike Merriweather, a 1988 holdout in Pittsburgh, was acquired for a first-round pick on draft day 1989. The Vikings had been grab-bagging at outside linebackers since Matt Blair's career as an impact player ended in the early 1980s. Merriweather was the best in Minnesota since Blair, but he didn't perform to his three-time Pro Bowl form. His impact was lessened primarily because he had to play the majority of the season at left outside linebacker, or over the tight end. Despite weighing just 220, he more than held his own against the rough stuff. But everyone knows Merriweather is a run-and-cover player best suited for the weak side. He's like a glorified safety, with 4.75 speed, fine hands and terrific change of direction.

This season, the Vikings plan to use Merriweather on the right side if Mark Dusbabek comes through. A pumped-up 240-pounder, Dusbabek relies on speed and quickness more than brute strength. If Dusbabek isn't able to hold up at the point, Ray Berry, the heir apparent in the middle behind Scott Studwell, will get the call. He replaced Jesse Solomon as the weakside starter for the last 11 games and registered 75 solo tackles and three sacks. Aggressiveness is Berry's forte. He is a jolting tackler and does some of his best work on the goal line. His weakness is speed, which is more easily exploited on the open side.

Studwell exceeded 100 solo tackles for the sixth season, but the first time since 1985. He still delivers a nasty lick to ballcarriers, blowing up between the tackles, yet at 36 and 230 pounds, how physical can one be? On a defense that lacks leadership and direction, his solid ability to call signals and get folks lined up properly shouldn't be undervalued. Studwell plays quite deep, takes good angles and generally is moving enough so he avoids collisions with interior blockers.

David Braxton, a No. 2 pick in 1989, spent too much time in the whirlpool and wound up in the doghouse. The guy has some tools and will run you sub-4.5s. However, he may not be a natural linebacker, as evidenced by his musical positions act (DE, LB, SS, WR, KR) at Wake Forest.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.0**

DEFENSIVE BACKS The Vikings have tried the rawest rookies and the creakiest veterans in a five-year search for a free safety. They thought so little of last year's tandem, Travis Curtis and Brad Edwards, that both signed elsewhere in Plan B. The leading candidate this time around is Plan B acquisition Ken Stills, an undersized (5-10, 186) but hard-hitting veteran who started all 16 games for Green Bay last year. Backing up is Darrell Fullington, a fifth-round pick in 1988, who started one game in two years. That was last year at Chicago, and he played horribly. Used primarily as a strong safety, Fullington has nice size (6-1, 197), speed, hands and hitting ability, and is more alert than his fun-loving personality suggests. But is he sound enough to make calls and direct traffic?

A heady, steady hand at free safety is vital in Minnesota because strong safety Joey Browner is prone to mental lapses. Last year, Browner's wandering concentration cost the Vikings touchdowns and big gainers. Maybe his mind was preoccupied with the indignity of his $350,000 contract. In previous seasons Browner played his best in the stretch run, but that wasn't the case in 1989. Perhaps the 10 extra pounds weighed him down. Physically, Browner probably is the NFL's best athlete at his position. He possesses incredible natural strength and phenomenal range. Browner, who went to his fifth consecutive Pro Bowl, intercepted five passes, giving him 20 in the past four years.

Left corner Carl Lee made a repeat Pro Bowl visit to Honolulu, though the other corner, Reggie Rutland, had a better season. Lee's interceptions dropped from eight to two. He started to press when big plays didn't come his way, was penalized too much and lost his edge. While he tried hard, it just didn't happen. The Vikings play their corners up tight in man coverage 80 to 90 percent of the time. That style exacts a physical toll, so the 29-year-old Lee will be watched carefully.

Rutland has been extremely consistent the past two seasons. Tall and fairly lean (6-1, 194), he is able to deflect routes in press situations, then turns well and runs downfield. His speed is in the 4.45-4.5 range. Postseason honors should come when he gains better pattern recognition. Audrey McMillian and Michael Brim make this one of the few areas where the Vikings have quality depth.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.5**

SPECIAL TEAMS The Vikings solved one problem last year when Rich Karlis replaced Teddy Garcia (1 of 5) in the fourth game, providing their best kicking since Jan Stenerud made the Pro Bowl in 1984. Karlis started 2 of 6, then fashioned one of his trademark hot streaks to finish 31 of 39, a career-best. He tied an NFL record with seven field goals in one game, then booted five in another.

Punter Bucky Scribner had a 39.8 average in his third season, but the Vikings demand more distance from a dome kicker. Coming from Pittsburgh via Plan B is Harry Newsome, who led the league in 1988 with a 45.4 average. But he dropped to 41.1 last year and had 12 punts blocked in his five years with the Steelers. The return and coverage units were better than average. Since the days of Bud Grant, the Vikings have had great kick-blocking schemes. They blocked three field goals, two punts and an extra point in '89.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.0**

COACHING/ ORGANIZATION Mike Lynn has pulled off some impressive deals in recent seasons. However, his megadeal for Herschel Walker could make his 1984 promotion of Les Steckel to head coach look shrewd.

Jerry Burns is 63, the oldest coach in the league. He has produced four consecutive winning seasons after the Vikings had just two the previous seven years. But the Vikings have done less with more Pro Bowlers than any NFL team. Burns named Tom Moore, who played and coached under Burns at Iowa, to oversee the offense that had been Bob Schnelker's province since 1986. It appears as if Moore will design the running game, Schnelker the passing game.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.0**

DRAFT After twiddling their thumbs for six hours, and with starting tight end/Pro Bowler Steve Jordan just 29 and going strong, Minnesota mystified onlookers by taking Jones with its first choice. Jones was inconsistent as a receiver, and as an in-line blocker is improved, but far from overpowering. Hobby has long arms and a good surge on the pass rush. He's probably best suited for tackle in a 4-3. Thornton runs well, but lacks the great speed the Vikings would like in order to free up Anthony Carter. Hampton, no blazer himself, played better in Pitt's man-coverage system as a junior than in zones as a senior, and that was the reason the man-oriented Vikings bit. Smith has terrific straight-line burst and is a good blocker. If Allen's knee is sound, he's a punishing tailback who could surprise.

GRADE (max. 10): **4.0**

1990 DRAFT round number (pick in round; overall sequence): 3. (1,54) MIKE JONES, TE, Texas A&M; 3. (21,74) MARION HOBBY, DE, Tennessee; 4. (23,104) ALONZO HAMPTON, DB, Pittsburgh; 5. (7,116) REGGIE THORNTON, WR, Bowling Green; 5. (22,131) CEDRIC SMITH, RB, Florida; 7. (23,188) JOHN LEVELIS, LB, C.W. Post; 8. (22,214) CRAIG SCHLICHTING, DE, Wyoming; 9. (21,241) TERRY ALLEN, RB, Clemson; 10. (1,249) PAT NEWMAN, WR, Utah State; 10. (23,271) DONALD SMITH, DB, Liberty; 12. (21,324) RON GOETZ, LB, Minnesota.

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VETERANS ROSTER

NO.	NAME	POS.	HT.	WT.	BIRTH-DATE	COLLEGE	NFL EXP.
46	Anderson, A.	RB	6-1	214	8/4/61	Baylor	7
50	Berry, R.	LB	6-2	226	10/28/63	Baylor	4
68	Blair, P.	T	6-4	280	8/3/63	Oklahoma State	3
53	Braxton, D.	LB	6-1	232	5/26/65	Wake Forest	2
44	Brim, M.	CB	6-0	186	1/23/66	Virginia Union	3
47	Browner, J.	S	6-2	223	5/15/60	Southern Cal	8
19	*Burbage, C.	WR	5-10	189	2/22/65	Kentucky	4
81	Carter, A.	WR	5-11	178	9/17/60	Michigan	6
33	Clark, J.	RB	6-0	233	1/3/60	Arkansas	9
71	Clarke, K.	DT	6-2	281	8/28/56	Syracuse	13
56	Doleman, C.	DE	6-5	263	10/16/61	Pittsburgh	6
42	Dozier, D.J.	RB	6-0	205	9/21/65	Penn State	4
59	Dusbabek, M.	LB	6-3	230	6/23/64	Minnesota	2
31	Fenney, R.	RB	6-1	231	12/7/64	Washington	4
29	Fullington, D.	S	6-1	186	4/17/64	Miami (Fla.)	3
16	Gannon, R.	QB	6-3	202	12/20/65	Delaware	4
80	Gustafson, J.	WR	6-1	174	3/16/61	St. Thomas	5
74	Habib, B.	T	6-7	282	12/2/64	Washington	2
89	*Hillary, I.	WR	5-11	190	11/13/62	South Carolina	4
72	Huffman, D.	G	6-6	278	4/4/57	Notre Dame	11
86	Ingram, D.	TE	6-2	230	5/2/66	California	2
76	Irwin, T.	T	6-8	290	12/13/58	Tennessee	10
84	Jones, H.	WR	6-0	195	7/2/64	Florida State	5
83	Jordan, S.	TE	6-4	241	1/10/61	Brown	9
69	Kalis, T.	G	6-5	286	5/10/65	Arizona State	3
3	Karlis, R.	K	6-0	180	5/23/59	Cincinnati	9
77	*Knight, S.	DT-DE	6-6	288	6/4/64	Brigham Young	4
39	Lee, C.	CB	6-0	184	4/6/61	Marshall	8
87	Lewis, L.	WR	5-8	166	9/17/56	Missouri	10
63	Lowdermilk, K.	C	6-3	263	4/10/63	Ohio State	6
49	*Lyons, R.	S	6-1	195	5/16/66	Akron	2
78	*Marrone, D.	T-G	6-5	269	7/25/64	Syracuse	3
64	McDaniel, R.	G	6-3	275	12/19/64	Arizona State	3
26	McMillian, A.	CB	6-0	189	8/13/62	Houston	5
57	Merriweather, M.	LB	6-2	222	11/26/60	Pacific	8
75	Millard, K.	DT	6-5	263	3/18/62	Washington State	6
18	*Newsome, H.	P	6-0	188	1/25/63	Wake Forest	6
99	Noga, A.	DE	6-1	248	9/16/66	Hawaii	3
36	Rice, A.	RB	5-10	206	4/5/62	Baylor	7
48	Rutland, R.	CB	6-1	192	6/20/64	Georgia Tech	4
17	*Schillinger, A.	WR	5-11	179	11/22/64	Miami (Ohio)	2
60	*Schreiber, A.	C-G	6-4	288	2/20/62	Texas	7
13	Scribner, B.	P	6-0	203	7/11/60	Kansas	6
27	*Stills, K.	S	5-10	186	9/6/63	Wisconsin	6
94	Strauthers, T.	DE	6-4	262	4/6/61	Jackson State	6
55	Studwell, S.	LB	6-2	221	8/27/54	Illinois	14
97	Thomas, H.	NT	6-2	268	1/12/65	LSU	4
34	Walker, H.	RB	6-1	226	3/3/62	Georgia	5
11	Wilson, W.	QB	6-3	210	2/1/59	East Texas State	10
73	*Wolfley, C.	G	6-1	269	5/19/58	Syracuse	11
65	Zimmerman, G.	T	6-6	283	12/13/61	Oregon	5

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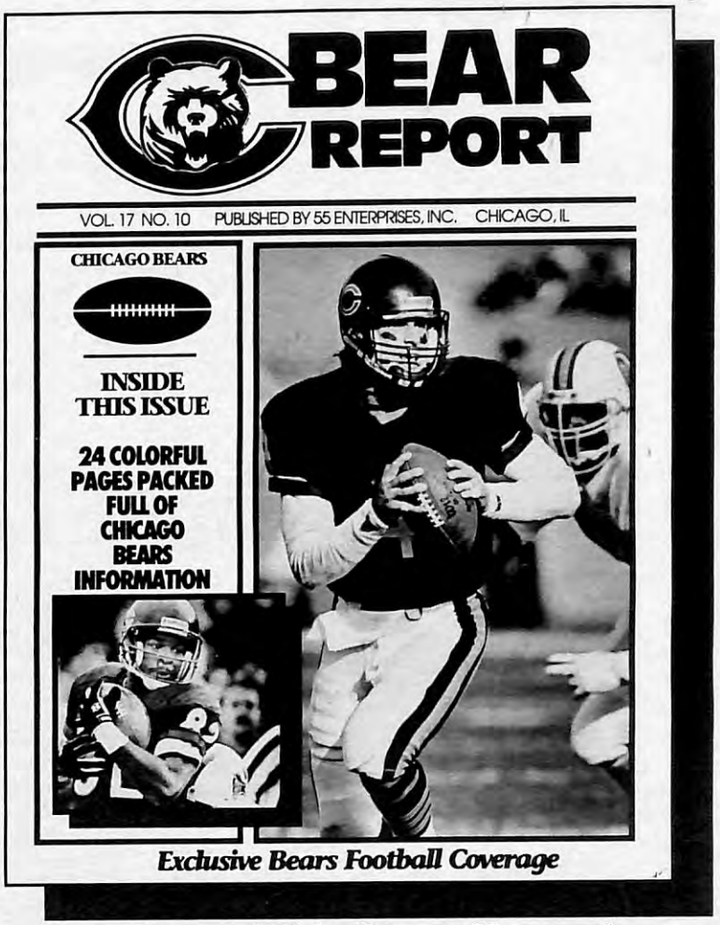

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CHICAGO BEARS

1989 RECORD: 6-10 HEAD COACH: MIKE DITKA STADIUM: SOLDIER FIELD (66,946)

Five years ago the Bears went 15-1 and destroyed New England in the Super Bowl, 46-10. They ruled the NFL with an intimidating, reckless defense and an efficient offense directed by cocky quarterback Jim McMahon.

Nineteen eighty-five seems like ancient history now. These days, the defense isn't quite as scary, and the team is searching for a leader to run the offense. Impact players such as the incomparable Walter Payton, McMahon, Otis Wilson, Wilber Marshall and Gary Fencik are gone, and stars such as Dan Hampton, Mike Singletary, Steve McMichael and Richard Dent are past their primes.

Prospects for 1990 are not entirely bleak, however. The NFC Central doesn't have a powerhouse team, leaving the door open for one last hurrah. The Bears have a big-time runner in Neal Anderson, a veteran line that can turn him loose, and young defenders Donnell Woolford and John Roper are a year older and wiser.

WIDE RECEIVERS/ TIGHT END

Chicago hasn't had a wide receiver catch more than 50 passes since Dick Gordon snagged 71 in 1970. That probably will change this year because the Bears will discontinue rotating their four top receivers. That switch in philosophy may determine just how good Wendell Davis and Ron Morris are.

With Dennis McKinnon departed via Plan B, Davis is the No. 1 guy. Because of his skinny frame, his not great, but deceptive speed and his exceptional hands, he has been compared to Minnesota's Anthony Carter. In traffic, Davis bounces around like a pinball and makes the tough grab. His routes are clean and precise.

Neither Morris nor Davis, however, are big-play receivers. Morris has the same general speed as Davis but isn't as maneuverable and his hands aren't as sure. At 6-1 and 192, Morris is something of a power receiver. This is his big opportunity. He made bigger plays and scored more touchdowns in 1988, compared to '89, and the Bears don't intend to endure further backsliding in 1990.

Dennis Gentry is 31 but remains the quickest of the wide receivers. Still, he isn't any faster than Morris or Davis, and he lacks the presence and receiving skills to be a full-time player. The Bears would be happy to use Gentry only on passing downs, both from the slot and out of the backfield. His short-area burst makes him a real threat on shovel throws. Although McKinnon was the club's best blocking wide receiver, Gentry always has been a good blocker and both Davis and Morris have improved. The fourth wideout is Glen Kozlowski, who can't run anymore but would enter a den of rattlesnakes to catch a third-down pass.

Tight ends Jim Thornton and Cap Boso produced 41 receptions last season for a 14.0 average and four touchdowns. Thornton, the starter, is an underachiever; Boso, in direct contrast, is a hard worker. The "RoboCop" nickname and image belie what Thornton has actually produced on the field. He's a 242-pounder who can run 4.7, lift the side of the gym and deliver crushing licks when he is so inspired. Boso doesn't run particularly well and his underdeveloped body doesn't seem suitable for the NFL, yet he maximizes what he has and seems to have a knack for making big plays. **GRADE** (max. 10): **6.0**

OFFENSIVE LINE

The Bears ranked fourth in yards per rush (4.43) and sixth in percentage of sacks allowed last year, evidence that their line remains one of the NFL's best. The No. 1 unit should remain intact for a sixth consecutive season. Although the youngest starter is 28, none has deteriorated to the point that would necessitate change.

Left tackle Jim Covert, the most decorated member in the mid-1980s, has slipped the most. Covert has had surgery on his elbow ('86), shoulder ('87) and back ('88). He is stiffer now, requires more double-team help from the back against speed rushers and doesn't crush defenders in the running game anymore. At this point, Covert is a finesse blocker. He is probably the second- or third-best offensive lineman on the team, but forget his long-gone All-Pro credentials.

Right tackle Keith Van Horne, the group's senior citizen at 32, matured late physically and still might have another two or three years left. In protection, the long-armed Van Horne usually maintains good separation and ties up most rushers because of his seasoning. However, he has limited quickness and isn't a powerful man. Defenders can throw him, and he thus spends too much time on the deck. Still, Van Horne is a dependable player who seldom embarrasses himself.

Right guard Tom Thayer is weight-room strong but isn't particularly physical. Effort isn't the problem, nor is athletic ability. The Bears have waited a long time for him to advance beyond the ordinary level and now, at 28, he probably never will. Thayer misses an inordinate number of blocks and was the team's most penalized lineman last season.

Athletically, left guard Mark Bortz isn't as gifted as Thayer. But he brings a brawling, take-no-prisoners approach to the job, and may be the club's best drive blocker. Bortz will lose occasionally to stunts and quickness in the pass rush, but overall, the Bears are delighted to have him.

Center Jay Hilgenberg went to his fifth consecutive Pro Bowl even though injuries hindered him for much of 1989. At 6-3 and just 260, he is at a decided disadvantage against the growing number of bigger, more physical nose tackles. He compensates with electric quickness, great balance and a big heart.

Gangly Chris Dyko, reminiscent of a young Van Horne, is almost 6-7 and about 300 pounds. The Bears detect he has genuine pass-protection potential although his coordination isn't fully developed. With grooming, Dyko could be a starter. Jerry Fontenot, a No. 3 pick in '89, is smart, tough and a decent athlete, but remains raw as a pass blocker. **GRADE** (max. 10): **7.0**

QUARTERBACK

Field boss Mike Ditka is spoiled. Jim McMahon gave the Bears resourceful quarterbacking and excellent leadership for seven years. In 1989, the first season without him, Chicago was 6-10. Now Ditka has soured on Mike Tomczak as a starting option, leaving unproven Jim Harbaugh at the switch. Citing the performances of scramblers such as Pittsburgh's Bubby Brister and Green Bay's Don Majkowski, the Bears believe the mobile Harbaugh can bring a new dimension to their offense.

Harbaugh made five starts last year when Tomczak fell apart near midseason. That gives him seven starts in three years, hardly sufficient time to make lasting judgments. He is a physical athlete and runner with a dash of charisma and leadership, a 62.4 completion mark in 1989, and an improved touch on the long ball. The negatives? Harbaugh bolts the pocket and runs too often, is a real novice at reading coverages, and won't likely assimilate the Bears' huge playbook in time to operate the offense effectively. Harbaugh is a coach's son, eminently coachable and just needs more direction in Chicago.

Friends of Tomczak blame his badly bruised shoulder for his fizzle. Check the numbers: 61 of 113, 54 percent, seven touchdowns and four interceptions in the first four games; 95 of 193, 49.2 percent, nine touchdowns and 12 interceptions thereafter. Tomczak had arthroscopic shoulder surgery after the season, but never mentioned the injury while he was playing. But that doesn't excuse Tomczak for taking needless risks with his misguided downfield missiles. Tomczak's arm may be slightly better than Harbaugh's, but it's not so strong that he can squeeze the ball into cracks like Dan Marino. Tomczak didn't mix as well in the locker room and lost some of his support from the rank and file. **GRADE** (max. 10): **4.5**

RUNNING BACKS

Because he succeeded Walter Payton, the NFL's all-time leading rusher, Neal Anderson isn't appreciated the way he should be. Anderson is a 210-pound back with breakaway speed and 1,000-yard instincts. Last year, he had the fourth-most yards (1,275) and fourth-best average (4.7) among the league's top 20 rushers and caught 50 passes for 434 yards. If Anderson hadn't lasted until the 27th pick of the first round in 1986, the Bears would be in total disarray offensively.

Only a few backs can go the distance and punish tacklers like Anderson. He won't power for 4 or 5 yards on virtually every carry like Payton, but he is a better split receiver than Sweetness. Strong safeties don't sleep well thinking of being matched with him outside. Anderson isn't afraid to block, either — another Payton trait. He had five fumbles in '89, but played with a broken left index finger the final eight games.

Payton benefited from having blocking backs Roland Harper and Matt Suhey in front of him. Anderson's running mate, Brad Muster, isn't a prototype fullback. He is more comfortable taking a pitch, as he did at Stanford, rather than plowing into the line with a handoff. A tall (6-3) back, Muster runs high and can be too easily stymied between the tackles. He isn't a very good goal-line and short-yardage runner. Muster's forte is the receiving game. He shows more instincts in space than behind center. Though Muster is developing as a blocker, the Bears could use a good lead bulldozer back for Anderson.

Thomas Sanders was lost in Plan B and Suhey retired, leaving halfback Mark Green and fullback Bryan Bero as the best spares. Green is a small (5-11, 184), slashing runner with no better than 4.6 speed. Bero is a roly-poly (235) blocker. **GRADE** (max. 10): **7.0**

DEFENSIVE LINE

All sectors had to shoulder blame for the crash of the defense from second in 1988 to 25th last season. In the final analysis, the defensive line was particularly abused — 19th in sack percentage, 22nd in yards allowed per rush (4.25). The 1985 Super Bowl front four is expected to appear at the Platteville, Wis., training camp, but how long they function may determine the fate of the 1990 Bears.

The Pro Football Hall of Fame is a goal of Dan Hampton. That's one reason he is returning after missing all but the first four games in '89 because of knee problems. Hampton has had 10 knee operations, five on each joint. The medical people aren't endorsing his return, but won't try to stop him from being carried out on his shield. Hampton, who makes everyone around him play better, has good initial quickness and excellent strength in his hands and arms. Even on battered pins, he's a powerful interior presence.

His longtime sidekick, left tackle Steve McMichael, will be 33 in October. He played OK in '89 (7½ sacks), but he wasn't moving as well. McMichael is strong, yet made a habit of beating guards to the passer because of his superior quickness and desire. He didn't beat guards as often in '89, and when he did, quarterbacks were able to escape him more than in the past. Replacing someone with his special skills will be next to impossible, and the Bears have nobody in mind.

William Perry isn't all bad, especially in the first half of early-season games. He attracts hordes of blockers and remains the immovable object at the point. But the Bears almost didn't include him on their 37-man protected list and will keep The Fridge off the field if he reports at

more than 300, an estimated 40-60 pounds under what he weighed last year.

The Bears used the 12th pick of last year's first round on left end Trace Armstrong. The selection earned mixed reviews. On the plus side, Armstrong plugged a gaping hole in the lineup and managed five sacks. On the minus side, he was constantly banged up and lacks size at 6-4, 259. There were several games where Armstrong was bounced around at the point of attack. With more weight work and recognition, he should improve. As a pass rusher, Armstrong has some upfield burst and explosive moves, but at this point, lacks enough flash to take the burden off Hampton or McMichael.

Right end Richard Dent started 15 games last season but showed some lingering effects from his broken leg of the year before. His total of nine sacks was his low since 1983. Three or four times a season, usually in the biggest games, Dent plays with extraordinary intensity. Otherwise, he goes when he feels the urge. Ditka ripped him last year for playing 15 pounds overweight and sacrificing much of his quickness. Dent's theory for increased productivity involves freeing him up some, a la Green Bay's Tim Harris and others. But that hasn't been defensive coordinator Vince Tobin's way, and the inmates don't run the asylum in Chicago.

GRADE (max. 10): **7.0**

LINEBACKERS Shrewd drafting once made Chicago's linebackers the best in the business — Otis Wilson (No. 1, '80), Mike Singletary (No. 2, '81) and Wilber Marshall (No. 1, '84). Recent drafts haven't been as productive, and the result is a pedestrian unit. Only John Roper, selected in the second round in 1989, has the talent to make a difference.

Singletary will be 32 in October and the Bears fear another fading superstar routine from him, like Walter Payton's swan song in 1988. With no one else to make tackles last year, Singletary responded with 79 solo stops, 151 total. Only once before in his illustrious career has he produced more tackles, but it was painfully obvious to close observers that Samurai Mike had started the inevitable slide. He didn't get to the plays he once did, and it frustrated him to no end. While there's no question Singletary has lost some quickness, not having Hampton and Perry available to tie up blockers contributed to his decline.

Look for the Bears to replace Singletary in nickel defenses this season. However, Dante Jones, drafted to succeed him, is the heir apparent in name only. At least the Bears know Jones can't play outside; that experiment failed in '89. If he can get in tip-top shape, which he wasn't last year, Jones might show the speed and range he had at Oklahoma. But it doesn't appear he will ever be physical enough to play the ultimate physical position for the Monsters of the Midway.

Roper, who started the final 10 games on the left side for Jim Morrissey (lacerated kidney), had an impressive season. Everyone knew he could fly off the edge and rush the passer, and he collected 4½ sacks as a rookie. The scouts questioned his work habits and intelligence. Roper is no Boy Scout, that's for sure, but he tended to business and kept assignment errors to a minimum. Strong and athletic, Roper's ability to run and hit juices up an aging defense.

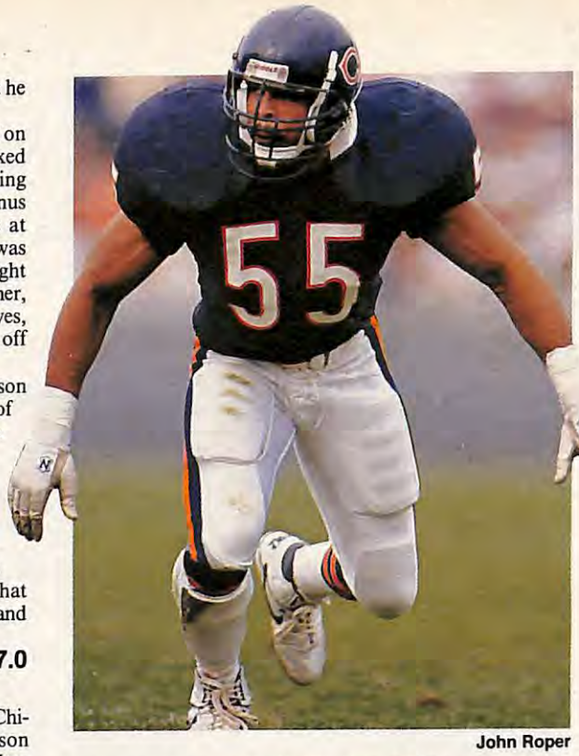
Ron Rivera probably should be an inside linebacker in a 3-4. As the left linebacker in a 4-3, he falls short because he can't run with receivers and isn't a dynamic blitzer. Rivera is a sound zone player (six interceptions in three years) because he's bright afield and conscientious off. Against the run, he slips blocks efficiently and holds his own at the point of attack.

Smallish (220) Morrissey has some value as a hustling backup, special teams player and nickel linebacker. He is smart and instinctive, enabling him to make more big plays than his modest tools should allow.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.0**

DEFENSIVE BACKS Donnell Woolford certainly seems the real thing. Vestee Jackson is adequate at the other corner, and strong safety Dave Duerson isn't too old to rebound from two ordinary seasons. If the Bears pick up at free safety, their secondary could be a real strength.

Woolford paid his dues as a rookie. He signed late, then had to play through a separated shoulder, a staph infection in his eye and a broken hand. Week after week, the Bears asked him to cover the opponent's top receiver, including Green Bay's Sterling Sharpe, Minnesota's Anthony Carter and the LA Rams' Henry Ellard. He won some and



John Roper

lost some, but never backed down and delivered flashes of a brilliant future. Woolford lacks some long speed, but has very quick feet, a burst to the ball and aggressive, in-your-face competitiveness. He's solid in run support.

Jackson isn't as fluid as Woolford and his speed is marginal for the corner. Put him in zones and he's fine, though. Jackson reacts quickly to the ball, and he isn't afraid to mix it up with receivers or blockers. He seemed to lose his confidence near midseason last year, walking out for a day or two after Ditka benched him for a game.

At 29, Duerson enters his eighth season and shouldn't be over the hill physically. But the Bears aren't sure how important football is to him at this stage. He didn't attack the run with his customary spit and vinegar last year, and his interception total dropped to one, a career low. If Duerson doesn't show more enthusiasm, young David Tate could take his job. Tate made some costly mistakes early in the season and drifted into Ditka's doghouse, only to re-emerge as one of the few bright lights during a dark December. Tate is a heavy hitter and a first-rate athlete. His slender frame and below-average speed work against him, though.

Free safety Shaun Gayle started well, but by season's end the Bears had soured on him. He didn't seem as reckless as in his 1988, pre-neck surgery days, and his speed and range never were pluses. Markus Paul, a No. 4 pick in '89, and possibly Tate will get the opportunity to replace Gayle. Paul is an alert, hard-hitting player who also lacks speed.

Cornerback Lemuel Stinson had a team-high four interceptions before suffering a major knee injury late in the season. He is the fastest defensive back on the roster, but may be too fragile at 159 pounds.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.5**

SPECIAL TEAMS Kevin Butler is a premier kicker. His career field goal percentage of .745 (108-145) is outstanding, especially considering the swirling winds and scruffy grass surface at Soldier Field. Butler doesn't have a particularly long leg, but there are few guys you'd rather have in the clutch from any distance.

The Bears didn't protect punter Maury Buford and hope to replace him in training camp. Buford had a career-low 39.5 average, but his net was a respectable 33.4. Not many 31-year-olds return kickoffs. Gutty Dennis Gentry not only doesn't mind, he continues to be one of the NFL's most dangerous return men. His 23.8 average was the highlight of so-so return and coverage units.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.0**

COACHING/ ORGANIZATION The Bears have always seemed a bit arrogant, and strong-willed owner Michael McCaskey, GM Bill Tobin and head coach Mike Ditka do little to alter the image. Despite such arrogance or self-assurance, the club's recent drafts have been lackluster. Furthermore, franchise performance in Plan B has been just plain bizarre. Recycled guard Kurt Becker is the Bears' only addition in two seasons of the free-agent rummage sale. Even worse, they have lost 16 players in Plan B, some of value, and watched as the rest of the NFC Central Division spent freely and closed ranks.

Ditka's image as a master of motivation was tarnished last season, too. Confronted with adversity for the first time in six years, he pouted in public and lost some of his players with senseless browbeatings. Rather than coach harder, he backed off and some players followed suit. Ditka enters this season in the last year of his contract. How he reacts to the situation probably will determine if the Bears rebound or fall farther into the abyss.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.5**

DRAFT Carrier agreed to terms before the Bears made him the sixth player chosen. Then word leaked out that at least two others (DE Ray Agnew, LB James Francis) refused Chicago's take-it-or-leave-it offers. Does that make Carrier the best athlete available or the quickest to pick up a pen? Carrier does hit and has good free safety range, but may have problems matching up in coverage. Washington is a quick enough mover to play defensive tackle and is ideally suited for the 4-3. Ryan was a relentless and productive collegian in blue-collar fashion, but may not have the right tools. Cox is a one-dimensional blitzer at this point, and Willis a one-year wonder under Bobby Bowden, whose Florida State quarterbacks usually fizzle in the NFL.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.5**

1990 DRAFT round number (pick in round; overall sequence): 1. (8,6) MARK CARRIER, DB, Southern California; 2. (7,32) FRED WASHINGTON, DT, Texas Christian; 2. (8,33) RON COX, LB, Fresno State; 3. (8,61) TIM RYAN, DT, Southern California; 3. (11,63) PETER TOM WILLIS, QB, Florida State; 4. (7,88) TONY MOSS, WR, Louisiana State; 5. (8,117) PAT CHAFFEY, RB, Oregon State; 6. (7,144) JOHN MANGUM, DB, Alabama; 7. (11,176) BILL ANDERSON, C, Iowa; 8. (7,200) JAMES ROUSE, RB, Arkansas; 9. (8,228) JOHNNY BAILEY, RB, Texas A&I; 10. (7,255) TERRY PRICE, DT, Texas A&M; 11. (8,284) BRENT WHITE, DE, Michigan; 11. (22,298) ROMAN MATUSZ, OT, Pittsburgh; 12. (7,310) ANTHONY COONEY, DB, Arkansas.

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VETERANS ROSTER

NO.	NAME	POS.	HT.	WT.	BIRTH-DATE	COLLEGE	NFL EXP.
35	Anderson, N.	RB	5-11	210	8/14/64	Florida	5
93	Armstrong, T.	DE	6-4	259	10/5/65	Florida	2
	*Becker, K.	G	6-5	269	12/22/58	Michigan	9
33	Bero, B.	FB	6-0	235	5/21/66	Utah	2
62	Bortz, M.	G	6-6	272	2/12/61	Iowa	8
86	Boso, C.	TE	6-3	240	9/10/63	Illinois	4
8	Buford, M.	P	6-0	198	2/18/60	Texas Tech	9
6	Butler, K.	K	6-1	204	7/24/62	Georgia	6
94	Chapura, D.	DT	6-3	275	6/15/64	Missouri	3
89	Coley, J.	TE	6-3	270	4/13/67	Clemson	2
74	Covert, J.	T	6-4	278	3/22/60	Pittsburgh	8
82	Davis, W.	WR	5-11	188	1/3/66	LSU	3
95	Dent, R.	DE	6-5	268	12/13/60	Tennessee State	8
37	Douglass, M.	DB	5-11	200	2/12/64	Kentucky	5
22	Duerson, D.	S	6-1	212	11/28/60	Notre Dame	8
68	Dyko, C.	T	6-6	295	3/16/66	Washington State	2
67	Fontenot, J.	C-G	6-3	272	11/21/66	Texas A&M	2
23	Gayle, S.	S	5-11	194	3/8/62	Ohio State	7
29	Gentry, D.	WR	5-8	180	2/10/59	Baylor	9
31	Green, M.	RB	5-11	184	3/22/67	Notre Dame	2
99	Hampton, D.	DT	6-5	274	9/19/57	Arkansas	12
4	Harbaugh, J.	QB	6-3	204	12/23/63	Michigan	4
63	Hilgenberg, J.	C	6-3	260	3/21/60	Iowa	10
58	Hyche, S.	LB	6-3	236	6/12/63	Livingston	2
24	Jackson, V.	DB	6-0	186	8/14/63	Washington	5
92	Johnson, T.	LB	6-0	236	11/10/64	Oklahoma	3
53	Jones, D.	LB	6-1	236	3/23/65	Oklahoma	3
88	Kozlowski, G.	WR	6-1	205	12/31/62	Brigham Young	4
76	McMichael, S.	DT	6-2	268	10/17/57	Texas	11
84	Morris, R.	WR	6-1	195	11/14/64	SMU	4
51	Morrissey, J.	LB	6-3	227	12/24/62	Michigan State	6
25	Muster, B.	RB	6-3	231	4/11/65	Stanford	3
36	Paul, M.	S	6-2	199	4/1/66	Syracuse	2
72	Perry, W.	DT	6-2	330	12/16/62	Clemson	6
52	Pruitt, M.	LB	6-1	215	1/10/65	Colorado	3
	Richie, T.	TE	6-3	232	12/2/65	Wheaton	2
59	Rivera, R.	LB	6-3	240	1/7/62	California	7
55	Roper, J.	LB	6-1	228	10/4/65	Texas A&M	2
50	Singletary, M.	LB	6-0	230	10/9/58	Baylor	10
32	Stinson, L.	DB	5-9	159	5/10/66	Texas Tech	3
	Sullivan, K.	P	6-0	210	5/15/64	Cal Lutheran	1
49	Tate, D.	S	6-0	177	11/22/64	Colorado	3
27	Taylor, B.	RB	5-10	175	10/1/67	Oregon State	2
57	Thayer, T.	G	6-4	270	8/16/61	Notre Dame	6
80	Thornton, J.	TE	6-2	242	2/8/65	Cal St. Fullerton	3
18	Tomczak, M.	QB	6-1	198	10/23/62	Ohio State	6
78	Van Horne, K.	T	6-6	283	11/6/57	Southern Cal	10
87	Waddle, T.	WR	6-0	181	2/20/67	Boston College	2
73	Wojciechowski, J.	G-T	6-4	270	7/30/63	Michigan State	4
21	Woolford, D.	DB	5-9	187	1/6/66	Clemson	2

*Plan B free agent

DETROIT LIONS

1989 RECORD: 7-9 HEAD COACH: WAYNE FONTES STADIUM: PONTIAC SILVERDOME (80,494)

Since that 1984 October afternoon in Minnesota's Metrodome when a knee injury ended Billy Sims' career, a pall had hovered over the Detroit Lions. In 65 games with Sims, the Lions were 33-32; in the next 71 games leading up to the '89 opener, they were 21-49-1. Few players in NFL history ever had more impact on a team than the Oklahoma running back brought to the Lions.

It took five years for this franchise to recover, but a late stretch last season proved the best the Lions have played since the Sims Era. They won six of their last seven games, including five in a row for the first time in two decades, to finish 7-9 for third place in the NFC Central Division. And the Lions' share of the credit went to rookie Barry Sanders, the Oklahoma State running back whom Sims said was better than he ever was.

Actually, the Lions have been on the upswing since Wayne Fontes replaced Darryl Rogers as head coach in late 1988. Fontes motivated players, hired a magnificent staff of veteran NFL coaches and risked the scorn of establishment nay-sayers by implementing the run-and-shoot offense. Attendance at the Silverdome jumped 12,000 per game in 1989. After sending only one position player to the Pro Bowl in the five previous seasons, the Lions sent three — Jerry Ball, Chris Spielman and Sanders — following their season of revitalization.

Nevertheless, such building optimism will be short-lived unless the Lions upgrade at quarterback, defensive end, cornerback and wide receiver. Their best-case scenario would find Rodney Peete blossoming in his second year, Sanders remaining in good health and the young defensive standouts continuing to emerge. In a division that lacks one dominant entry, the Lions are in position to win a championship two years after going 4-12.

WIDE RECEIVERS/ TIGHT END

The Lions, who disposed of their entire corps of 1988 wide receivers, weren't at all satisfied with the 1989 edition of Silver Stretch Smurfs.

It was no surprise Richard Johnson had the best season because he played the run-and-shoot in the USFL for Mouse Davis and June Jones, Detroit's quarterbacks/ receivers coaches. Johnson caught 70 passes, breaking Pat Studstill's club record of 67 for a wideout, and scored eight of the 11 touchdowns by wide receivers. Operating from the left slot in the four-wideout offense, he beat defenders on quick moves and with a keen awareness of coverages. A mere 5-6 and 185, Johnson isn't stopwatch fast. But the former running back has some elusiveness and ability to break tackles after the catch, and had very few drops.

Robert Clark started alongside Johnson at the left outside position and performed adequately. He is another disciplined, aware route runner who isn't able to run past many people. An unselfish player, Clark didn't tire of running clear-out routes for Johnson and will lay out over the middle. His only negative, other than lack of speed, was dropping a few too many balls.

The situation at the two right-side positions is murky. Aubrey Matthews, a Plan B signee from Green Bay, probably has the edge on Jason Phillips in the slot. Matthews has a better deep burst than Johnson or Clark, is a conscientious worker and has some background in the run-and-shoot attack. His problem with Atlanta and Green Bay was inconsistent hands; he isn't a natural catcher. When Phillips started the last five games, he made 21 of his 30 receptions. He is more quick than fast and showed some toughness inside.

The Lions may have made a mistake last year by drafting John Ford in the second round. Ford's attributes — size, exceptional strength, 4.45 speed — seem wasted in the Stretch. His rookie season was interrupted by a hamstring injury, so the jury remains out. Ford is a worker and perhaps can adapt. But with basically straight-line speed and no better than average hands, he faces a struggle to make the roster. Mel Gray has the best talent of the group but becomes so confused by post-snap coverage shifts that he just can't play. For the second straight season Detroit has no plans to carry a tight end. **GRADE** (max. 10): **3.5**

OFFENSIVE LINE

With right guard Mike Utley (knee) and right tackle Harvey Salem (shoulder) rehabilitating from major surgery, this unit is a question mark. The Lions have ranked 27th and 28th in percentage of sacks allowed the past two years. The running game led the NFL with 4.9 yards per attempt last season, but give Barry Sanders top billing for that fancy statistic.

Left tackle Lomas Brown, the seventh pick in the '85 draft, hasn't quite reached the top echelon at his position and may never do so. Some think he lacks the physical aggressiveness and mental toughness to play at a high plane week after week. Last year, he performed far below his ability level until about midseason, then had a Pro Bowl-type second half against some of the NFL's premier pass rushers. His forte is handling upfield quickness in protection. While Brown has the explosiveness to knock defenders off the ball, the Lions rely more on finesse running plays in the Stretch.

Detroit's best lineman last season may have been center Kevin Glover, converted from guard during the offseason. Barely 6-2 with short arms, he was better suited for the leverage battles against nose tackles than reaching for 'backers in bubbles. In some respects, Glover may have been the most improved player on offense. Until 1989, he hadn't been a reckless, go-for-the-throat player. Last year he led the linemen in cut blocks and knockdowns.

Chris Spielman

Utley, a 6-7, 290-pound rookie, surprised the Lions with his agility. He made the long pull as well as anyone on the roster and became an efficient trap blocker. Salem played with a bad shoulder for nine weeks before going on injured reserve. He plays soft in the run game and isn't a physical pass protector. When healthy, he has the balance and footwork to shut down even the top pass rushers, but he needs a return to his 1988 form.

Eric Sanders, a career backup, did well replacing Salem and earned a chance to start. Sanders isn't much of a drive blocker, but generally gets by on savvy as a pass protector. Ken Dallafior, 30, started the final 11 games in place of Utley. He is an intelligent scrapper who blends well in the locker room, plus he can play center.

The weakest starter was left guard Eric Andolsek, although they don't come any meaner or more intense. In a limited 5-yard area, Andolsek would make the Pro Bowl. However, he allowed too many cheap sacks because his tendency to be overaggressive affects his concentration and technique. And with his athletic limitations, he leaves a lot to be desired in space. **GRADE** (max. 10): **5.0**

QUARTERBACK

Bob Gagliano is both a blessing and a curse. The Lions were fortunate to have him handy when Rodney Peete suffered a series of knee injuries and Chuck Long (since traded to Rams) continued to tread water. At the same time, the Lions realize that as long as they play Gagliano, they are holding back someone who could be their quarterback of the future — which Gagliano assuredly isn't.

Peete will enter training camp as the starter. He earned the job as a rookie, making eight starts sandwiched around injuries. Gagliano started seven times. In an almost identical number of pass attempts, Peete beat Gagliano in rating (67.0 to 61.2), completion percentage (52.8 to 50.4) and touchdown/interception ratio. Neither conjured up visions of Warren Moon. Peete, a 6-footer, is a better athlete than Gagliano. He can scramble and run away from defenders. Very poised as a rookie, Peete is bright, mechanically sound, and a charismatic leader. His major shortcoming last season was inaccuracy in the short-to-intermediate passing range. He could throw a 15-yard route and miss by 4 yards. While Green Bay's Don Majkowski improved from 43 percent as a rookie to 59 percent in his third year, few NFL quarterbacks are able to dramatically increase their accuracy. Peete probably throws the deep ball better than the short stuff, but he simply lacks the pure arm strength to complete certain passes.

Detroit was Gagliano's seventh pro team. Having tasted a measure of success, he should become a more confident leader. His knowledge of the run-and-shoot attracted him to Mouse Davis, and was the primary reason veterans Rusty Hilger and Eric Hipple were sent packing.

GRADE (max. 10): **4.0**

RUNNING BACKS

The best back in the NFL last season was also the youngest. At 21, Barry Sanders came off an NCAA-record 2,628-yard final season at Oklahoma State to rush for 1,470 yards with the Lions — second in the league and only 10 yards behind the leader, Kansas City's Christian Okoye.

Davis proved his run-and-shoot system could accommodate a great back. The Lions relied on huge splits in the offensive line while retaining their four-wideout alignment. With defenders spread across the field, and with some teams employing extra defensive backs even on first down, Sanders got the ball on draws, traps and counters. The more familiar he became with the system, the better he ran. Sanders went over 100 yards in five of the last six games. He averaged 5.3 yards per carry and scored 14 touchdowns.

When scouts talk about running with vision, Sanders is the model. Last year, he left countless tacklers clutching

air with his stop-and-go style. Some veteran NFL coaches said they had never seen such jukes. But Sanders isn't just a darting cutback runner. He is a compact 205-pounder, equipped to power through arm tackles, a jackrabbit starter whose tach redlines by his third step. Although Sanders lacks world-class speed — his longest run last season was just 34 yards — he is usually confronting defenses with additional defensive backs.

Sanders wasn't without faults. He fumbled 10 times, tying Eric Dickerson of Indianapolis for the NFL lead among runners, and his attempts at blocking blitzers were pathetic. He was responsible for more sacks than any of the team's offensive linemen. Because Sanders is a willing worker and didn't have to block in college, he should improve, and the Lions fully expect him to do so. They also hope to integrate him into the passing game this year. He has exceptional hands.

If Sanders goes down, the Lions are in serious trouble. Carl Painter, a sixth-round pick in '88, stayed hurt too much his first two seasons. He is a scatback type who has some running skills and good speed.

GRADE (max. 10): 8.0

DEFENSIVE LINE The Lions made mistakes in 1989 Plan B. Nose tackle Dan Saleaumua went to Kansas City and was outstanding, while defensive ends Gary Hadd (Phoenix) and Thomas Strauthers (Minnesota) contributed. Detroit ended up with no pass rush from the outside and holes at end.

Fortunately, the Lions drafted Jerry Ball in the third round in 1987. He blossomed as a one-man wrecking crew last year and was recognized as the NFL's premier nose tackle. Ball had nine sacks — almost unheard of for his position — and registered 62 solo tackles. Separating Ball from his brethren on the nose are extreme hand quickness, a low center of gravity, immense bulk and a phenomenal level of intensity. Matched against his 310 pounds on a 6-foot frame, opponents find it virtually impossible to gain leverage on Ball. Many times he will come off hard, get under the center's pads and transport him 10 yards into the backfield. Also, Ball is athletic enough to dunk a basketball and to have been recruited by SMU as a fullback. His conditioning increased as well in '89. Still, if he were to trim to 285 pounds, he would be uncontrollable.

Stopgaps Eric Williams and Kevin Brooks will start at the ends until the Lions find someone better. That shouldn't take long and may include Plan B acquisition Mark Duckens (New York Giants). Williams learned to cope with pain last year and stopped asking to come out. He has good size and holds his own against the run in the Lions' two-gap system. However, he has a chronic hip problem that limits his practice time and reduces what athletic ability he has. Williams struggles to play an entire game, and his pass rush is strictly a matter of push and shove, with almost no burst to the corner or power moves back inside.

Brooks (6-6, 280), a sometime performer at Dallas, is even bigger than Williams (6-4, 286). He developed into a respectable two-gapper, but was even more invisible on the pass rush. Rather than go after tackles with straight power, Brooks tries to dazzle with finesse. Tackles get into his chest and jam his charge to a halt. Duckens was one of the plums available in Plan B with several clubs showing interest. Because of his pass-rush ability, he was a rarity in that talent pool.

Depth, as well as ability, is in short supply. Lawrence Pete is another fire hydrant-type nose tackle (6-0, 286). Veteran Keith Ferguson bulked up (285) to better stop the run, got hurt and probably should find another line of work.

GRADE (max. 10): 5.0

LINEBACKERS The Lions protected nine of their 10 linebackers during Plan B, indicating just how much they think of their backups. The starters — Jimmy Williams and Mike Cofer outside, Chris Spielman and Dennis Gibson inside — represent one of the NFL's elite groups.

Williams intercepted five passes — just one fewer than he had in his first seven seasons — and perhaps had his finest year. He came off '88 arthroscopic knee surgery to beat out George Jamison, regaining his position on the strong outside. Earlier in his career, Williams was a run-and-cover player best suited for the weak side. With steady weight training and attention to detail, he became proficient playing over the tight end and shutting down the sweep. He does well in all coverages.

There is considerable concern regarding Cofer as he begins his eighth season. At 30, he should be able to perform well for two or three more years. Still, the Lions are wary of burnout because he missed nine starts with shoulder and foot injuries last season, and he's an all-out practice player. The foot injury robbed Cofer of his upfield speed, which helped make him a Pro Bowler in '88. Still, he managed a team-high 9½ sacks. Anybody who knows Cofer also knows he will be on a mission this year.

Neither Spielman nor Gibson is the most athletic of inside linebackers. Some teams beat them with hook and flat passes to the backs and tight end. Although Spielman went to the Pro Bowl and Gibson was limited to just six games due to injury, Gibson might have graded higher. Compared to other weak inside backers, Gibson probably doesn't get outside as well as most, but stuffs the guard and inside run better. He makes the calls and sets the defense.

Spielman is an inspirational throwback. Like Gibson, he's quick to read, sheds blocks efficiently and makes a lot of plays in the line. He had a team-high 89 solo tackles last season, many of them bell-ringers.

Jamison runs in the 4.75 range and provides solid two-gap work over the tight end. He would be starting for a lot of folks. Mark Brown (Miami) and Niko Noga (Phoenix) were longtime starters for their old teams before catching on in Detroit. When Gibson went down, Victor Jones did a nice job in coverage.

GRADE (max. 10): 8.5

DEFENSIVE BACKS Bobby Watkins was the last cornerback the Lions drafted in the top three rounds. That choice was made in 1982. The years of neglect showed last season when the defense was nicked by opposing quarterbacks for a 64.9 completion percentage, an NFL high. The SOS is out.

Terry Taylor came from Seattle in a trade for running back James Jones and did an adequate job at left corner. He simply doesn't have the burst and skills to cover a Jerry Rice, but against most receivers he can press and still survive. The Lions would prefer him to be more courageous meeting the run. His one interception, for zero yards, wasn't much big-play production, either.

Jerry Holmes, the starting right corner for two seasons, intercepted six passes in 1989 but jumped ship via Plan B. His thievery will be missed, as the entire Detroit secondary picked off just nine passes. Perhaps the Lions found a Plan B replacement in William Judson, a longtime Miami starter who is almost two years younger than Holmes. But the only time Judson intercepted six passes was seven years ago. Ray Crockett, a No. 4 pick last year, is the athlete the Lions hope will replace Holmes.

Diminutive Bruce Alexander (5-9, 169), a second-year free agent, is another possibility as an heir apparent at cornerback. He showed legitimate cover ability as a nickel back last season, didn't back down from contact, and actually runs better than Crockett.

Bennie Blades has All-Pro written all over him. He is an explosive hitter with outstanding size (6-1, 221) and range. Switched from strong to free safety at midseason, Blades did a convincing impression of Ronnie Lott. He is at his best reading, reacting and roaring into plays. Man coverage on the strong side has given him some trouble.

At 5-10 and 191, William White is one of the NFL's smaller strong safeties. His speed is no better than ordinary, but he is tough as nails, smart and instinctive. The Lions are betting he will pay big dividends as he gets more seasoning.

GRADE (max. 10): 4.5

SPECIAL TEAMS Frank Gansz enhanced his reputation as a special teams guru. The Lions finished no worse than seventh in the four key return and coverage categories. Since then, Walter Stanley, who led the league with a 13.8 average on punt returns, vanished under Plan B. Mel Gray was second on kickoffs with a 26.7 mark. When Gansz holds court in special teams meetings, non-special teamers have been known to sit in for the inspirational show.

Eddie Murray went to the Pro Bowl following his second straight 20-of-21 field goal season. His only miss hit the upright. Murray will be 34 by opening day and his kickoffs aren't as long as they once were, but he may be the best field goal kicker in the game. Punter Jim Arnold tied for third in gross average (43.1) and was fourth in net (36.0). He has a big leg and excels with the pooch punt inside the 20.

GRADE (max. 10): 9.0

COACHING/ ORGANIZATION The Lions streamlined their front office in late December. Chuck Schmidt, vice president of finance, won a power struggle with Jerry Vainisi to replace retiring Russ Thomas. Schmidt's title, executive vice president and chief operating officer, places him second on the organizational chart beneath owner William Clay Ford.

Coach Wayne Fontes consolidated his standing with Ford, even though his bid to become director of football operations didn't pan out. Fontes, with input from lead scouts Joe Bushofsky and Ron Hughes, will call his own shots on all personnel moves, including the draft. Matched against personnel chiefs Bill Tobin, Tom Braatz and Jerry Reichow within the division, he is in fast company. On the coaching front, the emotional Fontes kept his team focused last season following a 1-8 start. His relationship with his players is close.

GRADE (max. 10): 6.0

DRAFT Well-tutored in the run-and-shoot in college, Ware has a strong, home run arm, good mobility and the intelligence to be a quick study. He lacks polish, and his straight dropback techniques are near-shoddy, but none of his weaknesses were enough to offset the obvious trust owner Ford has in Fontes, though the personnel department favored linebackers Chris Singletonand James Francis. Few teams rated Owens in the top four rounds, and Spindler's loose knee cost him draft position. Both are hard-working but slow inside players. Hinckley and Hayworth are outside pass rushers with raw ability and may project at end. Oldham is productive and could return kicks but lacks sustained speed (4.65). Henry is a legitimate 4.5 but is not 6-0.

GRADE (max. 10): 6.5

1990 DRAFT round number (pick in round; overall sequence): 1. (9,7) ANDRE WARE, QB, Houston; 2. (10,35) DAN OWENS, DE, Southern California; 3. (9,62) MARC SPINDLER, DE, Pittsburgh; 4. (10,90) ROB HINCKLEY, LB, Stanford; 4. (24,105) CHRIS OLDHAM, DB, Oregon; 5. (9,118) JEFF CAMPBELL, WR, Colorado, 6. (10,147) MAURICE HENRY, LB, Kansas State; 7. (9,174) TRACY HAYWORTH, LB, Tennessee; 8. (1,194) WILLIE GREEN, WR, Mississippi; 8. (10,203) ROMAN FORTIN, OG, San Diego State; 9. (9,229) JACK LINN, OT, West Virginia; 10. (10,258) BILL MILLER, WR, Illinois State; 11. (9,285) REGINALD WARNSLEY, RB, Southern Miss; 12. (10,313) ROBERT CLAIBORNE, WR, San Diego State.

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VETERANS ROSTER

NO.	NAME	POS.	HT.	WT.	BIRTH-DATE	COLLEGE	NFL EXP.
32	Alexander, B.	CB	5-9	169	9/17/65	Stephen F. Austin	2
65	Andolsek, E	G	6-2	286	8/22/66	LSU	3
6	Arnold, J.	P	6-3	211	1/31/61	Vanderbilt	8
93	Ball, J.	NT	6-1	298	12/15/64	SMU	4
36	Blades, B.	S	6-1	221	9/3/66	Miami (Fla.)	3
*97	Brooks, K.	DE	6-6	278	2/9/63	Michigan	6
75	Brown, L.	T	6-4	287	3/30/63	Florida	6
95	Brown, M.	LB	6-2	240	7/18/61	Purdue	8
50	Caston, T.	LB	6-1	243	7/17/65	LSU	4
82	Clark, R.	WR	5-11	173	8/8/65	N.C. Central	4
30	*Cocroft, S	S	6-1	190	8/29/61	San Jose State	6
55	Cofer, M	LB	6-5	244	4/7/60	Tennessee	8
39	Crockett, R.	CB	5-9	181	1/5/67	Baylor	2
67	Dallafior, K.	G-C	6-4	279	8/26/59	Minnesota	6
9	*Duckens, M.	DE	6-4	270	3/4/65	Arizona State	*2
77	Ferguson, K.	DE	6-5	285	4/3/59	Ohio State	10
80	Ford, J.	WR	6-2	204	7/31/66	Virginia	2
14	Gagliano, B	QB	6-3	196	9/5/58	Utah State	6
98	Gibson, D.	LB	6-2	243	2/8/64	Iowa State	4
53	Glover, K.	C-G	6-2	282	6/17/63	Maryland	6
23	Gray, M.	WR	5-9	162	3/16/61	Purdue	5
62	Green, C.	DE-NT	6-3	273	6/3/57	Alabama State	10
89	*Greer, T.	WR	6-1	192	9/27/57	Alabama State	5
58	Jamison, G.	LB	6-1	228	9/30/62	Cincinnati	4
84	Johnson, R.	WR	5-6	184	10/19/61	Colorado	2
57	Jones, V.	LB	6-2	240	10/19/66	Virginia Tech	3
49	*Judson, W.	CB	6-1	192	3/26/59	South Carolina St.	9
90	Karpinski, K.	LB	6-3	225	10/12/66	Penn State	2
83	*Matthews, A.	WR	5-7	165	9/15/62	Delta State	5
29	McNorton, B.	CB	5-10	175	2/28/59	Georgetown (Ky.)	9
44	Miller, J.	S	6-1	195	6/22/66	Michigan State	2
3	Murray, E.	K	5-10	180	8/29/56	Tulane	11
51	Noga, N.	LB	6-1	235	3/2/62	Hawaii	7
26	Painter, C.	RB	5-9	188	5/10/64	Hampton Institute	3
9	Peete, R.	QB	6-0	193	3/16/66	Southern Cal	2
96	Pete, L.	NT	6-0	282	1/18/66	Nebraska	2
24	Philips, J.	WR	5-7	168	10/11/66	Houston	2
73	Salem, H.	T-G	6-6	289	1/15/61	California	8
20	Sanders, B.	RB	5-8	203	7/16/68	Oklahoma State	2
64	Sanders, E.	T-G	6-7	286	10/22/58	Nevada-Reno	10
54	Spielman, C.	LB	6-0	244	10/11/65	Ohio State	3
21	Taylor, T.	CB	5-10	191	7/18/61	Southern Illinois	7
60	Utley, M.	G-T	6-6	279	12/20/65	Washington State	2
28	*Welch, H.	S	5-11	180	1/12/61	UCLA	6
35	White, W.	S	5-10	191	2/19/66	Ohio State	3
40	*Wilkerson, E.	RB	5-9	185	12/19/66	Kent State	1
4	Williams, B.	WR	6-2	185	10/31/60	Texas-Arlington	4
76	Williams, E.	DE	6-4	286	2/24/62	Washington State	7
59	Williams, J.	LB	6-3	225	11/15/60	Nebraska	9
63	*Wilson, C.	C	6-3	290	10/30/65	Missouri	1

*Plan B free agent

GREEN BAY PACKERS

1989 RECORD: 10-6 HEAD COACH: LINDY INFANTE STADIUMS: LAMBEAU FIELD (57,095), MILWAUKEE COUNTY (56,051)

The Green Bay Packers won 10 games last season when many observers felt they would win only five. Because four of the victories were by a single point, and because they played the NFL's easiest schedule, no one is certain whether they were a one-year wonder or a legitimate contender headed toward long-term prosperity. This season's schedule is more difficult, but the NFC Central Division hasn't been this wide open since the pre-Chicago dynasty days.

Clearly, it will be hard for the Packers to duplicate the magic and good fortune that marked their 1989 resurgence. Remember, they outscored opponents by only 362-356, and cynics claimed their aging defense used mirrors to stay competitive.

The skeptics say the Packers probably can't keep winning unless they find more impact performers to assist linebacker Tim Harris. True, the defense is old and slow, but if the offense can remain potent, and tackle Tony Mandarich emerges, the Packers may continue to outscore enough teams while the defense is overhauled.

WIDE RECEIVERS/ TIGHT END

Sterling Sharpe, the seventh overall pick in '88, was everything the Packers envisioned, and more. With an NFL-leading 90 receptions for 1,423 yards (second to Jerry Rice) and 12 touchdowns, Sharpe joined Rice as a consensus All-Pro. In the process, he shattered the club records of Don Hutson and James Lofton.

Two factors made Sharpe's season remarkable. As a rookie, he managed 55 catches but converted almost no big plays. Last year, on a team with overachievers at the other receiving spots, he produced as if immune to double coverage.

Sharpe lacks sprinter's speed, clocking in the 4.48 to 4.5 range. But considering he's almost 6-0 and 202 pounds, he's fast enough. Plus, he exhibits a quick burst after the catch that few receivers possess. With his size and elusiveness, he is extremely effective against smaller cornerbacks. He punishes defensive backs after the catch and is a hard-nosed blocker. Sharpe has little trouble against the press because of his release techniques and upper-body strength. Most of his long catches were over the shoulder and up the sideline. Some were acrobatic. He dropped about 10 passes, but considering how much Don Majkowski relied on him, that wasn't an issue.

Perry Kemp is a model of consistency (48-620 in '88, 48-611 in '89) as the motion receiver. The coaches like him because he's assignment-sure in an option-route system that places a premium on quick, post-snap adjustments. He isn't fast or athletic, but he is resilient and dependable.

Jeff Query, a fifth-rounder from Division III Millikin (Ill.), was one of the shrewdest picks in '89. The Packers brought him along slowly. Operating from the slot in the Flush (four-wideout) formation, Query had 23 catches without a drop. He is small (5-11½, 165) but tough, fast (4.4), quick and confident. Erik Affholter (No. 4 in '89) spent the year on reserve. He catches everything a la Brian Brennan, whom Packers coach Lindy Infante had in Cleveland.

Tight end Ed West, an undersized but fierce blocker, was the Pro Bowl alternate. At 6-1 and 243, he serves as a third tackle in the running game. West developed into an adequate short receiver and is tough to bring down. Former Buccaneer William Harris, a Plan B acquisition, is no blocker but has the speed to fill Infante's desire for a down-field receiver.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.5**

OFFENSIVE LINE

Better performance at all five positions was the primary reason the Packers rocketed from 24th to sixth in total offense. Passing on 62 percent of their plays, they weren't dissatisfied with a No. 17 rank in sack percentage. Surprisingly, the Packers were fifth in yards per rush (4.36). The talent level isn't exceptional, but the work ethic is, and competition within the unit is keen.

Tony Mandarich, the No. 2 overall draft pick a year ago, was awful. He had no clue on NFL pass-protection techniques and had little practice time to develop them after a contract holdout forced him to miss training camp. At 295 pounds and after passing his steroid test, Mandarich didn't punish defenders in short yardage. He lacked explosiveness, and his feet weren't as quick as advertised, either. Will he take over at right tackle by the opener? He says he will, but talk is cheap.

Alan Veingrad, the incumbent right tackle, slipped quietly into town as a free agent and played like a veteran. Which is fortunate for the Packers, because there's no way Don Majkowski would have survived if Mandarich had played last year. A quick study with long arms and good movement, Veingrad impressed as a pass blocker. He doesn't snap chin straps on the drive block, but he stays after it.

In 1989, left-side starters tackle Ken Ruettgers and guard Rich Moran had their best years. Ruettgers is an adept pass protector, masking average athletic ability with sound technique. As a run blocker, he relies on positioning to get the job done.

At 6-3, 275, Moran is a plugger who does his best work blocking for the run. He finishes his run blocks better than any Packers lineman. In pass protection, Moran prefers a short set and punch-out style. He has improved as a pass blocker, but can be burned by stunts.

Ron Hallstrom, the starting right guard since '84, is going strong at 31. He has a massive, indestructible body and a keen grasp of the offense. Hallstrom is a better run blocker in space than straight ahead. He played with more snap and less pushing in '89. At 290, Hallstrom isn't the niftiest guard, which sometimes causes him to lose his balance in pass protection. But he jams well initially and keeps the pocket intact against stunts.

Center is a potential problem. Blair Bush has played 12 seasons and doesn't feel he can be a full-time starter anymore. The grind of the 16-game schedule wore him down last year. Next in line is James Campen, who held up well against Kansas City's Dan Saleaumua last year in his only NFL start. Campen, a former Saint, is a battler. Whether he has the poise must be determined.

Guard Billy Ard is a solid veteran backup. Mike Ariey and Dave Croston have potential as starters. Ariey has the feet and wingspan to pass block at left tackle but not the experience. Croston, a No. 3 pick in '87, is comfortable everywhere but center. His problem has been injuries.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.0**

QUARTERBACK

Talk about rags to riches. Don Majkowski started '89 among the NFL's most anonymous starting quarterbacks. He finished as runner-up to Joe Montana in the MVP balloting. Some people consider Majkowski a one-year wonder. But can a fluke last 16 games?

What turned a 10th-round draft choice into the Majik Man? From a technical standpoint, it was a restructured delivery that reduced overstriding and led to a quicker release. That, in turn, produced 58.9 percent accuracy, compared to 43.3 in '87. Then there was the obvious factor of experience. He quit bolting the pocket and resorting to his ability to run whenever he sensed pressure. During an offseason of intense, usually solitary film sessions, Majkowski came to understand the intricacies of Infante's offense. Infante, the tutor, deserves some credit, too. Few thought this ex-option quarterback, with acknowledged raw athletic ability, could become an accurate pocket passer, but Infante did.

Then there were the intangibles. Majkowski swaggers like Namath but isn't arrogant. He appeals to all factions of the locker room. He'll get his jersey dirty, which the linemen love. He is extremely competitive and tough. His refusal to accept defeat produced last-second victories over Chicago, New Orleans and Tampa Bay.

Although Majkowski threw 20 interceptions last season, nine were in the first four games. He had more yards rushing (358) than any quarterback except Randall Cunningham.

Ironically, the Packers were just as excited about third-round pick Anthony Dilweg when the preseason ended. He has a stronger arm than advertised, fits the system and shows moxie.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.5**

RUNNING BACKS

At times, Brent Fullwood plays like a franchise back. He will fight for every inch, fluidly change direction and go the distance with a step of daylight. He's a load when everything is right.

Too often something is wrong. Fullwood has been accused of lacking motivation and babying injuries. Despite rushing for 821 yards last season in a pass-dominated offense, he gained over half that (434) in the first five games. As the fullback in Infante's one-back, Fullwood is asked to pick up blitzes and catch in the flat. He must continue to improve at both.

Halfback Keith Woodside started 16 games but carried only 46 times in the fullback-dominated rushing game. Woodside, who spends almost half his time as a split receiver, caught 59 passes. The Packers make opponents stop those quick hitches to Woodside, which is tough if the strong safety can't run. Woodside has 4.5 speed, fine hands and the moves of a wide receiver. He progressed as a blocker and an inside runner.

Herman Fontenot caught 40 passes operating as the lone setback in nickel situations. He is a husky (6-0, 206), aggressive pass blocker. As a receiver and runner, he is more dependable than dynamic. Vince Workman, a No. 5 pick in '89, is faster and will challenge for playing time.

Michael Haddix, a No. 1 pick in 1983, probably had his best season as Fullwood's backup. No Green Bay back is a better lead blocker. His ability to stuff the blitz is impressive. As a ballcarrier, he won't make any defender miss, but he showed some vision and power last season between the tackles.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.5**

DEFENSIVE LINE

The Packers haven't had a defensive lineman reach double figures in sacks since 1983. Their top individual total in the past four years was a pitiful five, and last season's leader, Robert Brown, had three. Collectively, the line had only 7½ sacks in '89. Don't expect any of the holdovers to make a big play against either the run or pass.

Defensive coordinator Hank Bullough uses a disciplined two-gap system, in which the linemen attempt to control blockers and let the linebackers flow to the ball. Brown is one of the better two-gapping right ends in the league. Because he stands a mere 6-2, he is able to get leverage against most tackles. With good strength and sound fundamentals, he handles the strongside run well. He is less effective in long pursuit and fair to non-existent as a pass rusher. Brown started the first six games at left end before moving back to his customary right side. Although his style would seem best suited for the heavy run side, he functions better at right end.

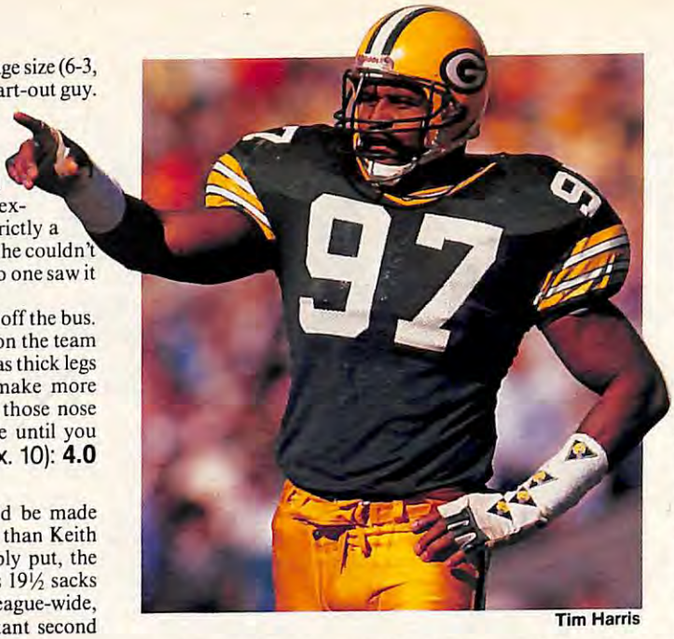
Shawn Patterson, a No. 2 pick in '88, opened at right end before requiring knee surgery after the sixth game. The injury was severe, so there is no guarantee he will return this season. A healthy Patterson has the most pass-rush ability of the group. He runs in the 4.85 range, has a few moves and was relentless as a collegian at Arizona State. He hasn't been as aggressive in the NFL. At 260, he slashes hard on the run to the other side but gets blown out on plays at him.

Left end Blaise Winter was a more determined run-

down player than Patterson. He has only average size (6-3, 275) and strength but always is a play-your-heart-out guy. His pass rush is negligible because he lacks put-away speed and an effective bull rush.

Mark Hall, drafted four rounds after No. 3 pick Matt Brock, probably has more physical ability. Hall (6-4, 285) is massive and flashes explosiveness, but needs experience. Brock is strictly a left end but was so weak in the upper body that he couldn't fight the run. If Brock has a pass-rush burst, no one saw it in '89.

Nose tackle Bob Nelson looks awful getting off the bus. He's old (31) and slow, yet he finished fourth on the team in solo tackles with 50. A durable slugger, he has thick legs and somehow lumbers through bodies to make more backside plays than he should. He is one of those nose tackles who doesn't seem to be that valuable until you can't find one. **GRADE** (max. 10): **4.0**



Tim Harris

LINEBACKERS The argument could be made that Tim Harris was a more deserving choice than Keith Millard as the league's defensive MVP. Simply put, the Packers had no pass rush without Harris. His 19½ sacks represented 57.4 percent of the team's 34. League-wide, Dallas defensive end Jim Jeffcoat was a distant second with 39.7 percent of the Cowboys' total.

In hunting down quarterbacks, Harris resembles an enraged octopus. At 6-5 and pushing 255, he is mostly arms and legs. He'll give a tackle one part of his body, then take it away quickly and disappear. He has a prehensile grip and surprising natural strength. Blockers should be aware of his good, but not great, upfield burst, hand slaps, lightning-fast secondary moves to the inside and hard power charge. His fourth-quarter rush is incredible because of his stamina and will. In '89, Harris became a more complete player by reducing penalties, taking on more leadership and improving his play at the point of attack. He split his sacks almost evenly between up and down positions. Most of the year, Bullough gave him the green light to rush from any place on the line, and the trash-talking Harris backed up his mouth.

Brian Noble and Johnny Holland are first-rate inside linebackers. Noble lost almost 10 pounds (to 242), improving his range and coverage. Despite his size, Noble isn't a classic strongside player. Not that he won't buckle up against guards, but most of his tackles for losses are made by reading and then slicing. He is instinctive and a decent athlete but is lifted in nickel coverage. Noble appears on the verge of postseason honors. He is a fiery, sometimes nasty leader.

Holland's strong suit on the weak side is flowing from sideline to sideline and defending the pass in zone coverage. He has muscled up to almost 235 pounds but still doesn't take on blockers well. Keep them off him, and he makes plays on hustle and quickness. His role probably will expand in '90 to include the nickel 'backer job in Bullough's 4-1 defense, replacing retired John Anderson.

For the first time since '78, someone other than Anderson will start at left outside. First crack goes to Scott Stephen, who seems better suited physically as a weakside blitzer. Stephen is barely 6-2, lacks keen instincts and is inexperienced over the tight end. Maybe with Anderson gone, Stephen will get it all together, but for three years, he has been more of a teaser than a pleaser.

Inside stuffer Burnell Dent is the best of the aging backups. He may be the best striker, and his 40 time probably is better than Holland's. But Dent has been hurt a lot, too, and needs repetition. **GRADE** (max. 10): **7.5**

DEFENSIVE BACKS On paper, this secondary is hurting. Dave Brown is 37. Mark Lee and Mark Murphy are 32. Lack of speed is a major drawback, and depth is in short supply. So why aren't the Packers in a panic?

Resourceful secondary coach Dick Jauron gets the most out of what he has. Last year, opponents completed 63.4 percent of their passes. And yet the Packers were a respectable 13th in the NFL, surrendering 209 yards passing per game. This is a zone team, allowing the possession catch but not getting beat deep. Five times last year, defensive backs made interceptions or fourth-down deflections to save victories.

Brown is one of the NFL's remarkable players. For long stretches, his lack of speed and hitting ability render his contributions almost nil. He has to play off receivers and isn't physical on run support. Teams go after him, but he is so cagey on route recognition that very seldom is he beaten deep. In 44 starts since being dumped by Seattle for an 11th-round pick, he hasn't allowed a long pass for a touchdown. His six interceptions last season tied for third among NFL cornerbacks, and left him tied for fifth all-time with 62.

Brown, Lee and Murphy have such extraordinary work habits that this is one of the league's most cohesive secondaries. Lee has started nine years but retains most of his speed and quickness. Despite a knee injury that limited him until midseason, Lee joined Brown as a Pro Bowl alternate. Lee has become rather reckless on run support, not in keeping with his length of service. He has 30 career interceptions, including nine in '86.

Murphy is smart, tough and an aware player in zones. His forte is rotating up against the run. The Packers scheme to avoid matching Murphy against speedy halfbacks on early downs. He plays deep in the nickel.

After sharing time with departed Ken Stills for two years, Chuck Cecil steps up as the full-time starter. His good range belies 4.7 speed. He anticipates well and is more of a ballhawk than Stills ever was. Against the run, Cecil is a kamikaze. The Packers want Cecil, 26, to be their free safety for years but fret he will burn out long before his time.

Cornerback Ron Pitts and safety Tiger Greene handled the slot receivers in nickel coverage. Pitts lacks true cornerback speed but compensates with instincts and aggressiveness. Greene is miscast in man coverage but hits hard and is comfortable at either safety.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.5**

SPECIAL TEAMS Rookie Chris Jacke singlehandedly prevented the special teams from a disastrous fate. He made 22 of 28 field goals, all 42 extra points, and his kickoffs were consistently deep. Five times he had opportunities to determine the outcome in the final minutes. And five times he came through, hitting three field goals and two extra points. Jacke has a compact motion and confident air.

The new punter is former Ram Dale Hatcher. He had big years in 1985 and '87, poor years in '86, '88 and '89. He is known more for direction and hang time than distance, and his previous work in cold weather wasn't distinguished. That could indicate problems.

The kick and punt coverage units earned the booby prize: 28th place. Rookie Jeff Query's longest punt return was 15 yards, yet he averaged a solid 8.2 and didn't fumble.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.0**

COACHING/ ORGANIZATION It took the Packers' board of directors almost 20 years to admit there wasn't another Vince Lombardi. The acknowledgement came with the January 1987 appointment of Tom Braatz to the new position of executive vice president of football operations. For the first time since the Lombardi era, the head coach wasn't the supreme commander. When Forrest Gregg bolted a year later, Braatz had the expertise the organization lacked to conduct an expert search, culminated by the hiring of Lindy Infante.

Infante and San Francisco's George Seifert won most of the coach of the year awards. Infante risks burnout by coordinating and calling his own offense and fulfilling countless public relations functions. Most players appreciate his consistent, even approach to discipline and individual concerns.

Braatz has an equally encompassing job, negotiating all contracts and coordinating the college and pro scouting departments. He is considered a man's man in the personnel business and by many agents, even some of those with whom he agrees to disagree.

The third member of the Big Three is Bob Harlan, a longtime club executive who, in June 1989, replaced retired judge Robert J. Parins as president. Harlan, a builder and savvy PR pro, helped defuse several potentially long holdouts last year. **GRADE** (max. 10): **7.0**

DRAFT Bennett could turn out to be as good as any linebacker in this draft. His specialty — playing strongside over the tight end — matches the vacancy created by John Anderson's retirement. He has a great first step, tackles hard and surprised postseason scouts with his fluid pass drops. Thompson, whom some scouts figured as a straight-line runner with little elusiveness, will push Brent Fullwood and Keith Woodside. He is niftier than many think, has a powerful upper body and good speed. Butler is a savvy corner with outstanding speed, while Houston is strong for his size and runs a 4.49. Harris, a wide receiver until last fall, can get deep while Wilson, academically ineligible in '89, also can move but often leaves his good hands behind. **GRADE** (max. 10): **6.5**

1990 DRAFT round number (pick in round; overall sequence): 1. (20,18) TONY BENNETT, LB, Mississippi; 1. (21,19) DARRELL THOMPSON, RB, Minnesota; 2. (23,48) LeROY BUTLER, DB, Florida State; 3. (22,75) BOBBY HOUSTON, LB, North Carolina State; 4. (21,102) JACKIE HARRIS, TE, Northeast Louisiana; 5. (23,132) CHARLES WILSON, WR, Memphis State; 6. (22,159) BRYCE PAUP, LB, Northern Iowa; 7. (21,186) LESTER ARCHAMBEAU, DE, Stanford; 8. (23,215) ROGER BROWN, DB, Virginia Tech; 9. (22,242) KIRK BAUMGARTNER,QB, Wisconsin-Stevens Point; 10.(21,269) JEROME MARTIN, DB, Western Kentucky; 11. (23,299) HARRY JACKSON, RB, St. Cloud St.; 12. (22,325) KIRK MAGGIO, P, UCLA.

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VETERANS ROSTER

NO.	NAME	POS.	HT.	WT.	BIRTH-DATE	COLLEGE	NFL EXP.
82	Affholter, E.	WR	5-11	181	4/10/66	Southern Cal	1
67	Ard, B.	G	6-3	270	3/12/59	Wake Forest	10
76	Ariey, M.	T	6-5	285	3/12/64	San Diego State	2
61	Boyarsky, J.	NT	6-3	290	5/15/59	Pittsburgh	10
62	Brock, M.	DE	6-4	267	1/14/66	Oregon	2
32	Brown, D.	DB	6-1	197	1/16/53	Michigan	16
93	Brown, R.	DE	6-2	267	5/21/60	Virginia Tech	9
51	Bush, B.	C	6-3	272	11/25/56	Washington	13
63	Campen, J.	C-G	6-3	270	6/11/64	Tulane	4
26	Cecil, C.	FS	6-0	184	11/8/64	Arizona	3
60	Croston, D.	T	6-5	280	11/10/63	Iowa	2
56	Dent, B.	LB	6-1	236	3/16/63	Tulane	5
80	Didier, C.	TE	6-5	240	4/4/59	Portland State	9
8	Dilweg, A.	QB	6-3	215	3/28/65	Duke	2
27	Fontenot, H.	RB	6-0	206	9/12/63	LSU	6
21	Fullwood, B.	RB	5-11	209	10/10/63	Auburn	4
23	Greene, T.	S	6-0	194	2/15/62	Western Carolina	6
35	Haddix, M.	FB	6-2	227	12/27/61	Mississippi State	8
72	Hall, M.	DE	6-4	285	8/21/65	SW Louisiana	2
65	Hallstrom, R.	G	6-6	290	6/11/59	Iowa	9
97	Harris, T.	LB	6-5	255	9/10/64	Memphis State	5
48	*Harris, W.	TE	6-5	250	2/10/65	Bishop	3
5	*Hatcher, D.	P	6-2	240	4/5/63	Clemson	6
50	Holland, J.	LB	6-2	235	3/11/65	Texas A&M	4
13	Jacke, C.	K	6-0	197	3/12/66	UTEP	2
24	Jakes, V.	CB	6-0	190	5/10/61	Kent State	7
88	*Johnson, F.	WR	5-10	185	7/13/63	McNeese St.	3
53	*Johnson, M.L.	LB	6-3	229	1/26/64	Hawaii	4
81	Kemp, P.	WR	5-11	170	12/31/61	California (Pa.)	3
22	Lee, M.	CB	5-11	189	3/20/58	Washington	11
7	Majkowski, D.	QB	6-2	197	2/25/64	Virginia	4
77	Mandarich, T.	T	6-5	300	9/23/66	Michigan State	2
98	*Miller, S.	DE	6-4	270	3/14/61	Utah State	7
57	Moran, R.	G	6-3	275	3/19/62	San Diego State	6
37	Murphy, M.	SS	6-2	201	4/22/58	West Liberty	9
79	Nelson, B.	NT	6-4	275	3/3/59	Miami (Fla.)	3
91	Noble, B.	LB	6-3	242	9/6/62	Arizona State	6
96	Patterson, S.	DE	6-5	261	6/13/64	Arizona State	3
28	Pitts, Ron	CB	5-10	175	10/14/62	UCLA	5
85	Query, J.	WR	6-0	165	3/7/67	Millikin (Ill.)	2
75	Ruettgers, K.	T	6-5	280	8/20/62	Southern Cal	6
84	Sharpe, S.	WR	5-11	202	4/6/65	South Carolina	3
54	Stephen, S.	LB	6-2	232	6/18/64	Arizona State	4
73	Veingrad, A.	T	6-5	277	7/24/63	East Texas State	4
52	Weddington, M.	LB	6-4	245	10/9/60	Oklahoma	5
86	West, E.	TE	6-1	243	8/2/61	Auburn	7
68	Winter, B.	DL	6-3	275	1/31/62	Syracuse	6
33	Woodside, K.	RB	5-11	203	7/29/64	Texas A&M	3
46	Workman, V.	RB	5-10	193	5/9/68	Ohio State	2
64	*Yarno, G.	C-G	6-2	270	8/12/57	Washington State	11

*Plan B free agent

TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS

1989 RECORD: 5-11 HEAD COACH: RAY PERKINS STADIUM: TAMPA (74,296)

The Tampa Bay Buccaneers have a legitimate chance to follow the path blazed last year by the upstart Green Bay Packers in the NFC Central Division. After seven consecutive losing seasons and a 26-85 record since 1983, the Bucs have enough potential impact players to duplicate their "Worst to First" division championship season of 1979. After all, consider the fifth-place schedule: Dallas twice, Atlanta, the Jets, San Diego.

Consider the personnel, too. Vinny Testaverde scares opponents, Paul Gruber is a stopper at left tackle, Mark Carrier and Ron Hall are Pro Bowl-caliber young receivers, and Broderick Thomas has the tools to be a standout pass rusher. Consider the odds. The law of averages says no team can continue to be as bad as the Bucs have been. The '89 Packers had strengths in many of the same areas, plus that significant fifth-place schedule. They improved six games, and now the division will be even more balanced than it was last year.

Yet, the Bucs just as easily could collapse if Ray Perkins becomes unbearable under fourth-year pressure. He has one winning NFL season in seven and may not get another shot if he doesn't make it two in 1990.

WIDE RECEIVERS/ TIGHT END

Perkins hasn't strengthened many areas of the roster, but this is an exception. In 1987, he drafted Mark Carrier from Nicholls State in the third round, injury-prone Ron Hall in the fourth round and converted cornerback Bruce Hill with a second pick in the fourth round. Carrier was a Pro Bowl alternate at wide receiver in 1989, Hall is one of the NFL's emerging tight ends, and Hill has 108 receptions the past two seasons.

Carrier has improved dramatically — 26 to 57 to 86 receptions — in his three seasons. Last year he increased his strength and stamina in a diligent offseason program that included martial arts. He beats people by running precise routes, meshing with Vinny Testaverde and catching well inside and outside. His percentage of drops is low. Carrier's speed is an average 4.6, but his moves are so refined he can make cornerbacks overcommit, then run by them. Carrier is capable of the acrobatic catch, and he's a willing blocker. He had nine 100-yard games, an NFL high, and was a unanimous choice as Bucs MVP.

Hill had that honor in 1988, then lounged around during the offseason, reported out of shape and was injured. He dropped way too many balls and seemed to be pressing, trying to compete with Carrier. Hill and Carrier have similar body builds and speed, but Hill has had more drops the past two seasons. He needs constant repetition because he lacks natural receiving skills.

The Bucs wouldn't mind a bit if Danny Peebles emerges in his second year to take time from Hill. Peebles, a top college sprinter with 4.4 speed, would be the Bucs' first wide receiver since Kevin House capable of stretching defenses. Peebles probably was a reach as a high No. 2 pick, because he lacks finely tuned skills. He is a bright guy, with surprising toughness and OK hands. His speed isn't the straight-line variety, either. Before he can challenge, he must take care of a surgically-repaired shoulder that he has dislocated several times.

The No. 3 receiver most of last year was Willie Drewrey, who at 14 receptions was three up on Peebles. Drewrey is small (5-7) but faster than Carrier or Hill. The Bucs were encouraged by his tough third-down catches late in the year. Ultra-quick Frank Pillow missed 13 games with a foot injury but was the No. 3 man in '88.

In Hall, the Bucs have a 6-4, 245-pounder with 4.75 speed and exceptional strength. He won't get deep often, but what tight end since Jimmie Giles has? Hall will battle for the ball in a crowd or sneak down the numbers. As a blocker, he utilizes more sustain than initial pop. His drawback is that he hasn't been able to stay healthy, although he plays hurt.

GRADE (max. 10): **7.0**

OFFENSIVE LINE

The Bucs have two upper-echelon linemen, left tackle Paul Gruber and center Randy Grimes. It's interesting that Grimes, a No. 2 choice in 1983, and Gruber, a No. 1 in 1988, are the only offensive linemen the team has drafted in the first three rounds since '82. You get what you pay for, which is one reason why the Bucs don't have a strong line. Two converted defensive linemen, Tom McHale and Harry Swayne, were among their five blockers with the most games in '89.

Gruber had a good, but not great, second season. He played every snap (for the second consecutive year) and wasn't penalized for holding, but he was responsible for 9½ sacks. Gruber's best attribute is his quick feet. They enable him to stay in front of most pass rushers. To take the next step, Gruber must work on hand placement and setting his feet more quickly. In the running game, he's so strong that he should be more effective. At times he gets his feet too close together and loses balance. The Bucs have finished a respectable 10th and 12th in sack percentage since Gruber arrived, after a 16th-place finish in '87.

Grimes, 30, enters his sixth full season as a starter and has been a Pro Bowl alternate the past two years. He doesn't look quick, but he is, especially with his hands. He has improved his speed against inside linebackers in the running game, and is quick enough to cut off nose tackles. Some nose tackles will overpower Grimes, but he seldom will get outhustled.

The Bucs have tried to replace lumbering tackle Rob Taylor since he left the USFL in '86. He is a subpar athlete who relies on technique and separation to survive in pass protection. Although Washington's Charles Mann ate him up in a midseason game, 1989 may have been Taylor's best year. He allowed five sacks. Swayne, a seventh-round pick in '87, moved to offense last year. His career is at the crossroads. If he can progress and develop, the Bucs will find a place for his athletic ability.

Because of injuries, five players started at least five games at guard. All remain suspects. The most promising is John Bruhin, a No. 4 pick in '88. He is strong, extremely athletic and excellent working in space. His problems are short arms and unpolished techniques.

McHale, who started 11 games at left guard when Mike Simmonds suffered a dislocated kneecap, is another solid athlete who can play any position except center. Signed as a free agent in '87, he converted to offense the next year. McHale is a better athlete than massive Carl Bax (6-4, 290), who started three games for Bruhin (knee) at right guard before getting injured himself. Right now, Bax isn't ready to pass block but he is extremely technique-conscious. He may not be ready to play following an arrest alleging illegal steroid importation.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.0**

QUARTERBACK

Gradually, Vinny Testaverde is getting better, but the Bucs didn't win any more games and patience is rapidly evaporating. In 1989, his interceptions were down (35 to 22) while his touchdowns (13 to 20), completion percentage (47.6 to 53.8) and rating (48.8 to 68.9) were up.

Last season's two Green Bay games spoke volumes about his development. In the first, a 23-21 victory, Testaverde looked off his primary target, dumped the ball off to backs and tight ends, ran for crucial gains when protection collapsed and had an 82 percent completion rate with no interceptions. Three months later, in a 17-16 defeat, he seemed confused, repeatedly threw off his back foot, was intercepted five times and absorbed four sacks.

The Bucs are 10-23 when Testaverde is the starter. He has grown as a leader, although he lacks the fire or intelligence to inspire an offense, let alone a team. As a passer, he can throw the deep ins and outs with anyone in the league. His negatives are throwing deep balls with too little arc and a lack of sound mechanics.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.0**

RUNNING BACKS

Tampa Bay hasn't ranked among the NFL's top 10 teams in rushing since 1979. The Bucs were 19th and 21st during James Wilder's two 1,000-yard seasons, and 26th, 21st and 23rd the past three years after Wilder burned out. With Wilder gone to Washington via Plan B, the Bucs dished out a pair of third-round picks ('90 and '91) for San Diego's Gary Anderson, a season-long holdout in 1989. And-

Lars Tate

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erson, more thoroughbred than workhorse, gives Tampa a bona fide feature back. He's athletic, explosive, has good hands and even better moves. At 6-1, 185, the Bucs certainly hope he's elusive.

Halfback Lars Tate should serve better as a complement rather than the main course. Tate is a slashing-style runner with 4.5 speed; he'll get to the corner just enough to tease you into thinking he's the answer. However, he lacks instincts, the moves to make tacklers miss and is not a gamebreaker. Nobody questions his toughness. As a goal-line vaulter, he is almost without peer. Of the team's 21 rushing TDs since he arrived as a No. 2 pick in '88, Tate has 15. He is a typical I-back seemingly miscast in a split backfield. To his credit, Tate has worked to improve his blitz pickup and receiving.

Fullback William Howard had a dynamite rookie season in '88 but slipped badly in '89, when he played at least 10 pounds overweight. It cost him quickness he couldn't afford to lose. He is a determined, punishing runner inside, catches the short pass well and blocks with authority.

Stumpy Sylvester Stamps (5-7, 185) is a poor man's Dave Meggett. He can motor on third-down draws and has outstanding quickness but gets dinged a lot.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.5**

DEFENSIVE LINE In 1988 the Bucs led the NFL with 3.2 yards allowed per rush and featured anonymous, young defensive linemen eager to take the next step as a pass-rushing unit. Today, the feeling is the Bucs almost have to start over. Their run yield collapsed to 22nd (4.2) and the line mustered only 16 sacks. Injuries were a factor; no one started every game. And maybe the group will develop, for none of the top five players is older than 25.

Reuben Davis is the only bona fide starter. What strikes you about him is his size (6-4, 290). He holds the point well as a quality two-gapper, reads quickly and can penetrate. He had a team-high 12 tackles for losses each of his first two seasons, and plays both hard and hurt. As a pass rusher, he is more bull than flash. He has some quickness, but usually not enough to turn the corner. Tackles must be alert for his bludgeoning arm blows, which can open a green aisle to the quarterback.

Robert Goff, the other second-year end, was a major disappointment. He clearly has more speed than Davis, but didn't register nearly as many pressures. Against the run, Goff didn't recognize blocking combinations and lacked the strength to hold his ground. He didn't bounce back from injuries, either. He's a problem, not the answer.

Ray Seals is also raw, coming to the NFL from the semi-pro Syracuse Express. Seals didn't play college football and went down early with foot surgery. This is the one guy the Bucs feel has upfield pass-rush potential.

Nose tackle Curt Jarvis hasn't finished any of his three seasons because of leg injuries. A short 6-2 and a pumped-up 270, Jarvis' relentless style makes him more of a pass rusher than some bulkier nose tackles. But he lacks the speed to pursue.

Shawn Lee has potential but doesn't use it. He tends to be lazy and hasn't been willing to pay the price. Physically, Lee (6-2, 285) can be a load as an inside pass rusher in four-man fronts. He has explosion and top strength but isn't much of a technician; he was a linebacker until his senior year at North Alabama. **GRADE** (max. 10): **4.0**

LINEBACKERS If the Bucs are to upgrade their anemic pass rush, Broderick Thomas must get involved. Thomas arrived as the No. 6 overall pick, missed training camp and then sat on the bench for 16 weeks, registering two sacks and two pressures. Thomas (6-3, 250) could likely make the move down in a 4-3, á la Minnesota's Chris Doleman. But the Bucs seem committed to their 3-4, so Thomas absolutely must help in four-man nickel fronts, while he tries to beat out Kevin Murphy or Winston Moss at outside linebacker. Thomas didn't seem motivated enough as a rookie, although he possesses all the measurables. His problem at linebacker will be learning the system. He requires constant repetition.

Murphy and Moss are much alike. Neither is an outstanding pass rusher - Murphy had six sacks and 25 pressures, Moss had 5½ and 23 - but they have enough speed and quickness to improve. Murphy played more over the tight end and is good handling the strongside run. Moss runs slightly faster than Murphy and is better in coverage. He has more big-play potential. Murphy is the more disciplined of the two.

Inside, Ervin Randle and Eugene Marve finished 1-2 on the team in tackles but never excited coaches. Randle (6-1, 250) is built like a Greek god and is an explosive tackler. He has the strength to buckle almost any guard coming to greet him. There are games when he plays to a Pro Bowl level, but more often, blown assignments and slow reads get in his way. Marve is the more instinctive of the two and is around the ball more in the passing game. Randle is faster, but Marve deflected eight passes to Randle's one. The weak point of Marve's game is movement; his strength is taking on blockers. He's also a good leader. Marve, 29, has taken a lot of hits, and his career could go south in a hurry. Wide-bodied Sidney Coleman (6-2, 250) plugs between the tackles but lacks range. **GRADE** (max. 10): **6.0**

DEFENSIVE BACKS This secondary is long on smarts but short on talent. It was opportunistic in '89 (21 interceptions), but permitted quarterbacks an 82.2 rating and 29 touchdown passes. Combine marginal personnel with minimal pressure, and you have a defense ranked 27th in points allowed.

Left corner Ricky Reynolds has been the secondary's top player since arriving as a second-round pick in '87. He has good but not great speed, misses few assignments and handles the run OK. He had five interceptions, 21 passes defensed, two forced fumbles and two fumble recoveries last season. He probably ranks among the top 10 to 15 NFL corners.

Rod Jones, a former No. 1 pick, shouldn't be a starter. He added 10 pounds of muscle during the last offseason and actually plays the run better than the pass. In coverage, he lacks instincts and fluid movement. His top-end speed isn't bad, but he accelerates poorly to the ball.

Safeties Mark Robinson (strong) and Harry Hamilton (free) are clones. Both are 27, both played at Penn State and both are intelligent, articulate men of the world. Each had six interceptions in '89 by reading quarterbacks' eyes and playing basic zones. Robinson may be one of the better run-forcing strong safeties. Overall, he has more tools than Hamilton, who has more starting experience. Neither has much speed, but the Bucs don't mind because they maximize their ability, exert a positive influence and play well together. Strong safety Odie Harris might be the only backup with potential to start. He can run and hit but needs reps to be effective.

Corners Eric Everett (Philadelphia) and Rodney Rice (New England), and safety Evan Cooper (Atlanta) were signed during Plan B to beef up the nickel package. The Eagles thought Everett was too skinny (5-10, 166) to play, even though he's fast, athletic and smart, while Rice, with pretty good speed, is an intriguing possibility. Cooper can't cover one-on-one but might be a two-deep nickel safety. **GRADE** (max. 10): **5.5**

SPECIAL TEAMS Donald Igwebuike is respected by everyone but his coach. Perkins, who cannot pronounce "ig-way-BWEE-kay" (he calls him "Donald Kicker"), loves to rag on Igwebuike's substandard kickoffs. Then someone called Elias Sports Bureau and discovered he was fifth in the league last year in touchbacks. Igwebuike did have his share of lousy, short kickoffs, but who's counting? In five seasons he hasn't missed a field goal from inside 35 (41 of 41), he's 60 of 64 inside 40 and 9 of 17 from 50 or longer. The Nigerian was 22 of 28 in 1989, including his fifth career game-winner.

The Bucs used a No. 6 pick on punter Chris Mohr one year after taking punter Monte Robbins in the fourth. Robbins was cut before he could kick in a game. Mohr, a tall (6-4) athlete with a booming leg, struggled with a 39.4 average (22nd) and a 32.1 net (23rd). He was an improvement on Ray Criswell for distance, but not accuracy.

Willie Drewrey was sixth in the NFL with an 11.0 punt-return average. The kickoff return and coverage units ranked in the lower half of the league.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.5**

COACHING/ ORGANIZATION When you win as few games as Ray Perkins and rub as many people the wrong way, you generally don't last long in the NFL. Perkins is only the second coach in league history to be retained after three consecutive seasons of 10 or more defeats, equaling the Bucs' first field boss, John McKay, in 1976-78. This probably will be Perkins' last chance.

He has big problems in delegating authority. He does it all, and all his own way. Young Mike Shula was promoted to quarterbacks coach this year, an admission that Perkins wasn't punching the right buttons with Vinny Testaverde, his inherited first pick from the '87 draft. Perkins drafted well in his first two years but slumped miserably in '89. But his most obvious flaw is his distaste for dealing with people who don't think and live like he does. An example is defensive end Ron Holmes, who bucked the system and was dispatched to Denver for a fourth-round draft choice. Holmes was a force, and the Bucs had no one close to replacing him.

Fred Bruney, a longtime NFL assistant, replaces Doug Graber (Rutgers) as defensive coordinator. Perkins complained that the old scheme was too complex.

GRADE (max. 10): **4.0**

DRAFT Perkins threw caution to the wind, skipped over vaunted USC linebacker Junior Seau and went directly to his alma mater for McCants, the Alabama impact player whose value had been tarnished by slow offseason clockings and the prospects of post-draft arthroscopic surgery. If the knee holds, Perkins has little worry. McCants can play inside, outside or could beef up to 270 and line up at defensive end.

Cobb was an even bigger gamble. His talent is on a par with Penn State's Blair Thomas (Jets), the second player chosen, but after flunking three college drug tests, Cobb's reliability is questionable. Anderson must upgrade his blocking and Mayberry has yet to tangle with pro-size defenders. Late-rounder Cook showed some pass-rush ability in all-star games. **GRADE** (max. 10): **5.5**

1990 DRAFT round number (pick in round; overall sequence): 1. (6,4) KEITH McCANTS, LB, Alabama; 2. (5,30) REGGIE COBB, RB, Tennessee; 4. (6,87) JESSE ANDERSON, TE, Mississippi State; 4. (27,108) TONY MAYBERRY, C, Wake Forest; 5. (5,114) IAN BECKLES, OG, Indiana; 6. (4,141) DERRICK DOUGLAS, RB, Louisiana Tech; 7. (6,171) DONNIE GARDNER, DE, Kentucky; 9. (4,224) TERRY COOK, DE, Fresno State; 10. (6,254) MIKE BUSCH, TE, Iowa State; 11. (5,281) TERRY ANTHONY, WR, Florida State; 12. (4,307) TODD HAMMEL, QB, Stephen F. Austin.

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VETERANS ROSTER

NO.	NAME	POS.	HT.	WT.	BIRTH-DATE	COLLEGE	NFL EXP.
40	Anderson, G.	RB	6-1	190	4/18/61	Arkansas	5
56	Anno, S.	LB	6-2	235	1/26/65	Southern Cal	4
75	Bax, C.	OL	6-4	290	1/5/66	Missouri	2
55	*Bob, A.	LB	6-3	255	10/30/67	Texas A&M	2
69	Bruhin, J.	OG	6-3	285	12/9/64	Tennessee	3
7	Carlson, J.	QB	6-3	215	5/23/66	Weber State	1
88	Carrier, M.	WR	6-0	185	10/28/65	Nicholls State	4
53	Coleman, S.	LB	6-2	250	1/14/64	Southern Miss	3
21	*Cooper, E.	DB	5-11	195	6/28/62	Michigan	7
79	Davis, R	DE	6-4	285	5/7/65	North Carolina	3
76	*Dill, S.	OT	6-5	285	4/5/66	Memphis State	3
87	Drewrey, W.	WR	5-7	170	4/28/63	West Virginia	6
42	*Everett, E.	DB	5-10	170	7/13/66	Texas Tech	3
36	Futrell, B.	DB	5-11	190	8/4/62	Elizabeth City St.	5
94	Goff, R	DE	6-3	270	10/2/65	Auburn	3
65	Graham, D.	C	6-2	270	5/10/65	Northern Illinois	2
60	Grimes, R.	C	6-4	275	7/20/60	Baylor	8
74	Gruber, P.	OT	6-5	290	2/24/65	Wisconsin	3
82	Hall, R.	TE	6-4	245	3/15/64	Hawaii	4
39	Hamilton, H.	DB	6-0	195	11/29/62	Penn State	7
20	Harris, O.	DB	6-0	190	4/1/66	Sam Houston State	3
84	Hill, B.	WR	6-0	180	2/29/64	Arizona State	4
43	Howard, W.	FB	6-0	240	6/2/64	Tennessee	3
1	Igwebuike, D.	K	5-9	190	12/27/60	Clemson	6
95	Jarvis, C.	NT	6-2	270	1/28/65	Alabama	3
22	Jones, R	DB	6-0	185	3/31/64	SMU	5
38	Lawson, J.	FB	5-10	240	10/2/65	Nicholls State	2
97	Lee, S.	NT	6-2	285	10/24/66	North Alabama	3
99	Marve, E.	LB	6-2	240	8/14/60	Saginaw Valley St.	9
73	McHale, T.	OG	6-4	285	2/23/63	Cornell	4
41	Mitchell, A.	FB	6-0	235	8/20/64	Auburn	2
5	Mohr, C.	P	6-4	220	5/11/66	Alabama	2
58	Moss, W.	LB	6-3	235	12/24/65	Miami (Fla.)	4
59	Murphy, K.	LB	6-2	235	9/8/63	Oklahoma	5
57	Najarian, P.	LB	6-2	235	12/22/63	Minnesota	3
96	Newton, T.	NT	6-0	285	3/23/63	Florida	6
86	Parks, J.	TE	6-4	245	9/14/64	Auburn	4
83	Peebles, D.	WR	5-11	180	4/30/66	N.C. State	2
80	Pitrow, F.	WR	5-10	170	3/11/65	Tennessee State	3
54	Randle, E.	LB	6-1	250	10/12/62	Baylor	6
29	Reynolds, R.	DB	5-11	190	1/19/65	Washington State	4
31	*Rice, R.	DB	5-8	180	6/18/66	Brigham Young	2
30	Robinson, M.	DB	5-11	200	9/13/62	Penn State	7
98	Seals, R.	DE	6-3	270	6/17/65	None	1
24	Stamps, S.	RB	5-7	180	2/24/61	Jackson State	7
70	Swayne, H.	OT	6-5	270	2/2/65	Rutgers	4
34	Tate, L.	RB	6-2	215	2/2/66	Georgia	3
72	Taylor, R.	OT	6-6	290	11/14/60	Northwestern	5
14	Testaverde, V.	QB	6-5	215	11/13/63	Miami (Fla.)	4
51	Thomas, B.	LB	6-4	245	2/20/67	Nebraska	2

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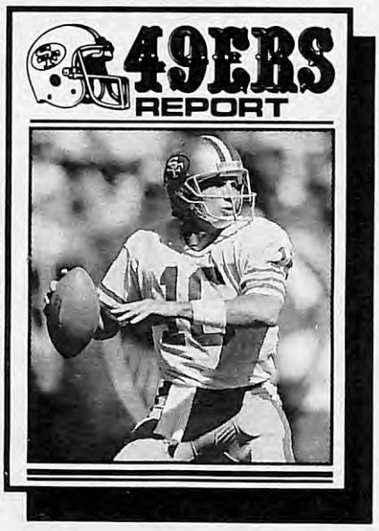

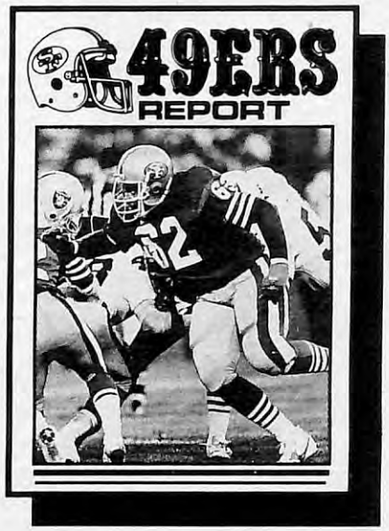

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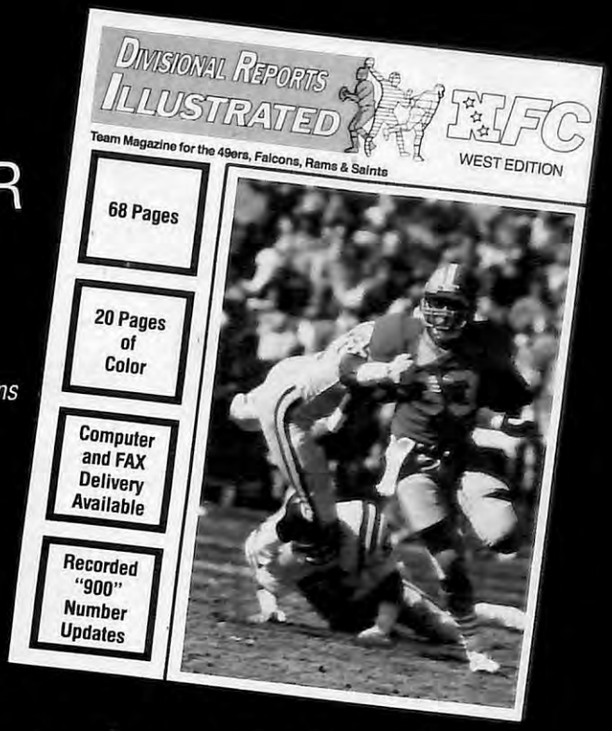

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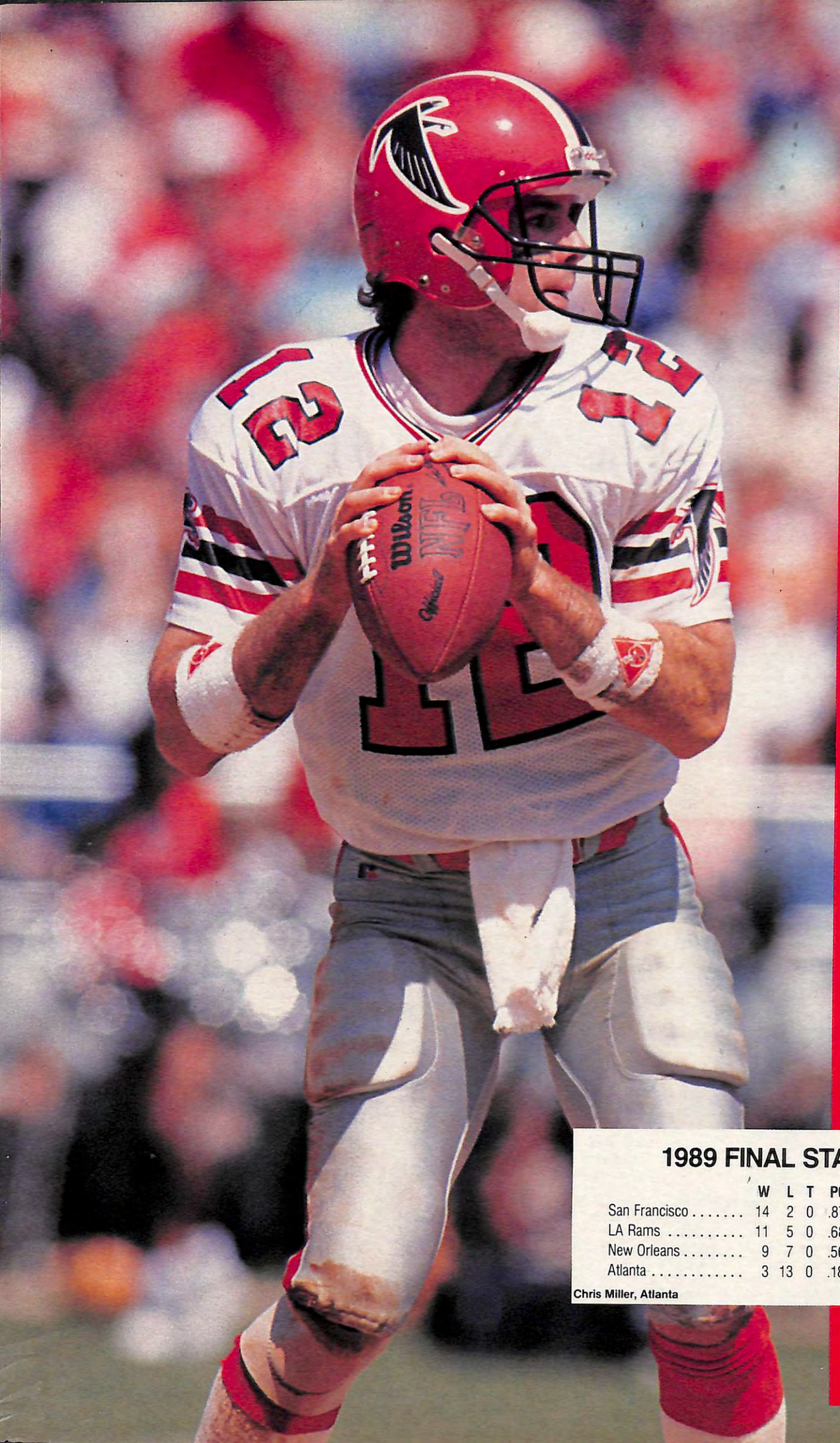


NFC WEST

1. San Francisco
2. LA Rams
3. New Orleans
4. Atlanta

1989 FINAL STANDINGS

	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA	DIV	NFC
San Francisco	14	2	0	.875	442	253	5-1	10-2
LA Rams	11	5	0	.688	426	344	4-2	8-4
New Orleans	9	7	0	.563	386	301	3-3	5-7
Atlanta	3	13	0	.188	279	437	0-6	1-11

Chris Miller, Atlanta

SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

1989 RECORD: 14-2 HEAD COACH: GEORGE SEIFERT STADIUM: CANDLESTICK PARK (65,701)

Early in the fourth quarter of his team's record-setting 55-10 thumping of the Denver Broncos in Super Bowl XXIV, San Francisco 49ers quarterback Joe Montana sidled over to head coach George Seifert on the sidelines and casually mentioned the possibility of a third straight championship in 1990. The mere suggestion of a "three-peat," and the fact that Montana was already motivated toward that goal, should be enough to have at least half the NFL's teams shaking and the other half contemplating the possibility of secession from the league. Of course, just because most observers are prepared to concede the Niners a record fifth Super Bowl title doesn't mean Seifert will approach the '90 season like he's the overwhelming favorite. In '89, Seifert lived by the credo: Take care of the details and the details will take care of the big picture.

The wisdom exhibited in Seifert's debut head coaching season paid off. In the afterglow of becoming the first team to win consecutive Super Bowls since the Steelers in 1978 and '79, the tribulations of the '89 season were buried. Most people looked at the 49ers' postseason supremacy and forgot that the club had its share of problems, especially early on.

Half a dozen veterans missed a significant portion of training camp. Young veterans Terrence Flagler and Tim McKyer, both since traded, were unhappy. Key interior defensive players, such as nose tackle Michael Carter and linebackers Riki Ellison and Jim Fahnhorst, were injured. The career of strong safety Jeff Fuller was ended after a collision with Patriots running back John Stephens in October. The team played its first three games on the road, had to come from behind to win each of them, and lost a home game to the World Series earthquake. Even Montana missed three games and halves of two others with knee, elbow and rib ailments.

By midseason, of course, the Niners were rolling, a Super Bowl freight train on a downhill joy ride. The ride probably won't end until January in Tampa. Last year, when the 49ers were eminently more beatable than people imagined, no one could beat them. This year, they probably won't have nearly as many problems, so who's to argue with a third straight title?

WIDE RECEIVERS/ TIGHT END

Jerry Rice and John Taylor are double trouble for opposing secondaries. Each is capable of turning a 5-yard slant into an 80-yard touchdown. In the 49ers' ball-control, underneath passing game, where 15-yard routes are the norm, they add more stretch than Spandex. Taylor and Rice combined for 142 catches, 2,560 yards and an incredible 27 touchdowns. All were league highs for a starting wide receiver tandem. The duo averaged a touchdown every 5.3 times they touched the ball, also by far a league-best.

The fluid Rice is a touchdown waiting to happen, a guy who turns bloop singles into tape-measure home runs. In just 76 games, he has 70 touchdowns. Rice has terrific eye-hand ability and field awareness, but it's his tremendous ability to kick into some other-worldly warp-speed gear in just one step that makes him so great. In short, Rice is the best receiver in the game, and always plays big in the big games.

Taylor is blessed with more clock speed than Rice and may be closing in on him, too, as an open-field runner. A smooth runner with deceptive speed, he comes over the middle well, catches the ball out front and can break into a long-striding sprint in just a few steps. Like Rice, Taylor can sky for the ball.

Things get a bit hairy after the starters. Mike Wilson still gets off the line well, but lacks his once-explosive burst and is mostly relegated to working the short sideline zones. Still, with his knowledge of the system, he's an old hand worth having around. Mike Sherrard, a home run prodigy in Dallas, is still trying to overcome past leg woes.

Tight end Brent Jones, signed as a free agent in '87, has become one of the club's all-time steals. Despite just pedestrian speed, Jones disengages from the first chuck quickly, then works his way into the spots cleared by the wideouts in the 49ers' well-meshed passing game. Jones has great awareness and adjusts well to the ball. He isn't a pretty runner, but gets extra yardage when he turns downfield. As a blocker, Jones seals off well on the outside, but needs better strength to be as effective in-line.

Wesley Walls is a pretty good athlete with size, strength and blocking ability. **GRADE** (max. 10): **8.0**

OFFENSIVE LINE

The San Francisco offensive line likely isn't as physical as the coaches would like, and there are probably only two truly superior players —guard Guy McIntyre and tackle Harris Barton — in the bunch. But the unit possesses great versatility, flexibility and a penchant for keeping Montana's uniform clean in the big games.

Only in his second season as a full-time starter, right tackle Barton is a tough, heady and extremely mature player. Although his pass protection still needs some polishing, he moves easily and has learned to extend his arms into the shoulders of charging rushers and lock out. More than anything, he's helped by a sixth sense, an eyes-behind-his-head feel for where he is in relationship to the pocket's big picture. Barton uses his excellent knowledge of angles and positioning even better in the running game, where his quick feet and leverage skills make him a valuable pull man. In fact, Seifert at times used him at guard. Barton is a good drive blocker, adjusts to cut off the back side and always seems to play from a well-balanced base.

At left tackle, rotating starters Bubba Paris (first and third quarters) and Steve Wallace (second and fourth), are an oddly matched pairing. Paris is a blob who plays it soft; Wallace is a lean machine with feistiness. Paris continues to fight weight problems, and played the postseason at 350-plus pounds. His knee bend has started to disappear, but Bubba still has a good set, uses his hands well and knows all the tricks. While speed rushers bother him, they have to take a circuitous route around him. As a run blocker, Paris is more mush than mash. Wallace has more pop and drive at the point of attack, and uses his arms well in pass protection. His feet are only average, but he maintains good position.

At guard, McIntyre has developed into one of the league's best, his rise in status corresponding with his ability to stay healthy and keep his weight under control. McIntyre has quick feet and is tremendous at pulling out of the line. While his judgments aren't the best and his angles are often shaky, he's a brute in head-on collisions, with enough punch to put defenders on their backs. McIntyre has a thick lower body, plays with good balance and locks onto blocks well. As a pass blocker, he does a good job of mirroring and shadowing rushers.

The 49ers are hoping that former Falcons snapper Wayne Radloff can move in at center, allowing them to move Jesse Sapolu from center to a more natural habitat at right guard. Sapolu is a determined competitor with good strength, quickness and overall athletic ability. He's particularly adept pulling, and executing cutoff blocks. Though a solid, alert pass blocker, Sapolu gets overextended at times, and he can be bulled.

Bruce Collie (first and third quarters) and veteran Terry Tausch shared the right guard spot over the second half of the 1989 season. Collie, a stiff-looking athlete who lacks knee bend, has good strength at the point of attack. However, he tends to play high and loses explosiveness out of his stance with inefficient motion. A former tackle, the 6-6 Collie uses his long arms and strong hands well in pass protection, but too often gets overextended and off-balance. Tausch, another former tackle, is more a push-pull blocker, a technician who lacks muscle. He struggles at times in pass protection.

Tom Rathman

Radloff, who had fallen out of favor in Atlanta, lacks upper-body strength, often gets rag-dolled, doesn't bend well and needs double-team help on the better nose men. On the other hand, he makes heady adjustments and knows the game. **GRADE** (max. 10): **6.5**

QUARTERBACK

How does the highest-rated quarterback in NFL history, a guy with a niche already reserved for him in Canton, improve on his game? Well, Joe Montana found a way in 1989. Montana set a new single-season record for quarterback efficiency with a rating of 112.4. He threw a league-low eight interceptions, and the 49ers' passing game, even in the absence of its creator, Bill Walsh, moved to a new level.

After 11 years in the league, Montana's touch is better than ever. His arm is still good enough, especially since he doesn't have to throw the ball very far to get big results. His feel for the game — and sixth sense about when to challenge and when to lay back — is unmatched. He is totally collected in "hurry-up" situations and has become the master of the two-minute drill. Injuries have cut his mobility some, and he doesn't throw as often from the half-roll, and only occasionally from waggle action. But he makes the subtle moves necessary to buy time, and he's actually become a better pocket passer.

Lefty Steve Young is probably one of the swiftest quarterbacks in the history of the game. He challenges defenses with his outside speed and is quick enough to run around containment. Although his accuracy improves when he moves behind or outside of the tackles, Young is getting better throwing from the three-step drop, as evidenced by his 69.6 percent completion rate. The biggest question is whether or not, at age 28, Young can live with being Montana's caddy. **GRADE** (max. 10): **9.5**

RUNNING BACKS

There's a definite lack of depth, but it's tough to argue with the *starting pair. In* tailback Roger Craig and fullback Tom Rathman the Niners have one of the league's best complementary tandems.

While Craig had a so-so season in '89, the hard-nosed Rathman really came into his own as an integral part of

the San Francisco attack. He's a tremendous lead blocker inside, gets out in front of the sweep and always gets a piece of someone. He's just as effective picking up blitzing linebackers. Although he only runs the ball from scrimmage four or five times a game, Rathman has a sneaky burst and subtle moves between the tackles. Plus, he bleeds every last millimeter out of a run. As a receiver, Rathman isn't nifty, but he gets the job done with smarts and instincts (73 receptions in '89). He knows his role in the structure of the passing scheme and plays it to perfection. His sense of timing on delays is excellent.

Craig remains a productive feature back, but at 30 the nicks and bruises stick around a little longer. During the regular season, he averaged only 3.9 yards (second-lowest of his career) and his longest run was for just 27 yards. But, like most of his big-name teammates, Craig always delivers a winning hand when the big money's on the table. When he's on his game, Craig has the most explosive start in the league. Although he's successful running the toss sweep, it's more a tribute to his reading ability than his speed. Craig has a feel for letting the interference scheme develop, reading a gap and then bursting through with his trademark high-knee action. Craig remains an accomplished receiver, but he's apt now to hook up, rather than try to take a 'backer deep. His abilities on the simple quick swing are a key to the 49ers' passing attack.

Second-year pro Keith Henderson, who battled injuries and off-field (steroid) problems a year ago, is a combo fullback/tailback type runner with decent burst and speed.

GRADE (max. 10): **7.5**

DEFENSIVE LINE The 49ers had enough defensive line depth in 1989 to overcome the loss of three-time Pro Bowl nose tackle Michael Carter (foot) and still finish No. 3 in the league against the rush. The down linemen also managed 28½ of the club's 43 sacks. They may need just as much depth in 1990. Carter had offseason bone-graft surgery on his foot and his return is shaky. Backup Pete Kugler retired.

Once again, particularly on the nose, it appears the Niners will play defensive line by committee. In the case of nose men Jim Burt and Fred Smerlas, acquired from Buffalo via Plan B, the committee totals 64 years of age and 20 years of NFL experience. When Carter missed half the season, Burt took over and played remarkably well, especially for a guy whose past back woes had caused the Giants to release him. Burt can't collapse the interior offensive scheme anymore or gain much penetration. What he can do is plant himself, use his hands well to control the center's initial charge, and keep people off the linebackers. Burt, never the most flexible athlete, plays a bit high at times because of his back. That's when he can get rocked. After being deemed at the end of his career by the Bills, Smerlas shuffled out of Buffalo for the siren call of Eddie DeBartolo's long green. It remains to be seen how much he's got left. Smerlas is still bull-strong and crafty, but he doesn't tie people up like he used to and often runs himself out of plays in an attempt to circle around the action. Like Burt, he can be a good leader.

The emerging force on the 49ers' defensive front is left end Pierce Holt, who tied linebacker Charles Haley for the team lead in sacks with 10½. Holt is a tremendous competitor who combines good speed, some bull-rush ability and refined moves to get to the passer. Smart and alert, he plays hard on every down and never backs down from a confrontation. Although not a great athlete, Holt has some flexibility and closed-area quickness. He can play outside or inside, but seems most effective when he bounces to tackle in four-man looks, where he actually gets more sacks. He's also strong enough to contain and choke off on the outside as an anchor man.

Right end Kevin Fagan is strong-willed and single-minded, and has overcome a variety of injuries to become a big-play performer. Although he lacks natural size, he's a dedicated weight lifter with good upper-body strength. Fagan does a solid job of controlling blockers versus the run, and is a fine power rusher with quickness off the mark and a closing burst.

The departure of Daniel Stubbs (trade, Dallas) leaves oft-injured Larry Roberts as the top backup. A former starter, Roberts brings bulk and muscle to the fray.

GRADE (max. 10): **7.0**

LINEBACKERS The one true impact player among the linebackers, sack man Charles Haley, is a hybrid, a guy who plays almost as much defensive end as linebacker. The super-quick Haley had another outstanding season terrorizing quarterbacks in 1989, collecting 10½ sacks and a ton of "scared-ya's." Haley is an unyielding attacker with a sprinter's start. He closes in a blink and tackles high, strafing quarterbacks across the arms and often causing fumbles. A superior athlete with long arms, Haley is disruptive in the passing lanes, even when he doesn't get to the quarterback. He can run forever, chases down a lot of plays from behind and his effort is always first-rate. Because he lacks body mass, teams try to run at him, but Haley has improved at holding his ground and stripping interference.

Keena Turner, the other outside linebacker, has big-time savvy and instincts. But he has lost much of his big-play athleticism. He can't run with the backs the way he used to, and his reverse gear is a bit creaky when he drops into coverage. Against the run, he gets good leverage at the point of attack and his lateral movement is still a plus.

The most consistent player on the unit is inside linebacker Michael Walter. He has superior reading skills and is always in good position. Strong and intense, Walter plays off blocks efficiently and makes a lot of plays in the line. He's also tireless in pursuit. Matt Millen, Walter's partner inside, provided a steadying hand. He doesn't ward off blows well anymore, but he still can summon up some bursts where he plays effectively between the tackles.

Outside backup Bill Romanowski is a good athlete who can take on blockers and move easily in coverage. He isn't an explosive player, but he has good feel and can loop around people on the blitz. What he needs now is more playing time.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.0**

DEFENSIVE BACKS Free safety Ronnie Lott dispelled the critics who thought he had lost it by putting together another solid season. Although he doesn't run as well anymore, the 31-year-old Lott compensates with good feel, excellent reflexes and a keen sense of timing. He plays the ball well (5 interceptions in '89) and supports the run even better. While Lott will bite on play action, his aggressiveness is more of a plus than a minus. He remains a dominant defender.

Strong safety Chet Brooks, who took over for Fuller, is a physical player with good quickness but a lot of bad coverage habits. A former corner, Brooks never has learned the principle of separation and allows receivers to get on top of him before he gets out of his backpedal. The Niners' scheme gives him a lot of man responsibility and he struggles with it. Brooks is much better versus the run.

Former Browns All-Pro Hanford Dixon will get every chance to beat out incumbent Darryl Pollard on the left corner. Brash and cocky, Dixon's game had dropped off dramatically in Cleveland over the past two seasons. His hands are inconsistent, but his feet are still quick and, while he doesn't turn as well as he did five years ago, he retains some recovery speed. Dixon has a mean streak, but isn't as nasty as he once was. Pollard is no McKyer in coverage, but he's adequate. His run force is very good.

Right corner Don Griffin is a solid defender who likes to play it up close and personal, using his physical style to deliver a tough initial chuck. Smooth in retreat and very alert, Griffin maintains a good cushion and closes down quickly on a receiver. He seldom gets beaten deep. Like the rest of the secondary, he plays the run aggressively.

Former Saints star Dave Waymer, who played corner the first nine years of his career before moving to safety in '89, likely won't challenge Lott or Brooks, but should get plenty of playing time in the nickel. Former All-Pro Eric Wright offers experience and smarts, but injuries have cut short what could have been a brilliant career.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.5**

SPECIAL TEAMS Although his 20 fair catches represented the third-highest total in the league, John Taylor rates as one of the NFL's top punt return men. Taylor is sure-handed, doesn't let the ball hit the ground and can flat-out explode through a crack and be gone. The loss of Terrence Flagler weakens the kickoff return game. Keith Henderson and Spencer Tillman will likely take over that chore. The club's coverage units ranked in the top quarter of the league.

Mike Cofer hit 29 of 36 field goal attempts, but slumped toward the end of the season and was just three for six in postseason play. Punter Barry Helton is an inconsistent performer who could be replaced. Thirty-five of his league-low 55 punts (among qualifiers) were returned in '89.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.0**

COACHING/ ORGANIZATION Seifert became just the second coach in NFL history to win a title in his first year, as the 49ers missed nary a beat. Remarkably composed in his debut season, Seifert delegates well but still stays close enough to the action to make a difference. He is detail-oriented, concise and quietly forceful. Best of all, while some changes were made in '89, he was smart enough not to tinker too much. Offensive coordinator Mike Holmgren's rise was meteoric. He could have had either the Jets or Cardinals head coaching jobs had he wanted to leave. Defensive coordinator Bill McPherson is excellent, but doesn't get his due. Ditto offensive line coach Bobb McKittrick.

Organizationally, there can be no better owner to work for than Eddie DeBartolo Jr., who spends whatever is necessary to win. Vice president John McVay, who functions not unlike a general manager, is an excellent football man.

GRADE (max. 10): **9.0**

DRAFT After failing to cut a trade to move up for an impact linebacker, the 49ers filled a variety of needs with Florida State mighty mite Carter. Carter will return kicks, play from the slot and even get an occasional stint at running back in some formations. Although he'll have to be spotted, Carter gives the 49ers' backfield a breakaway dimension it was lacking. No. 2 pick Brown could be a dominant defensive player or a bust. He's quick and has some lower-body strength, but his weight problems are well-documented. Fellow second-rounder Davis is an alert, fluid corner with deep acceleration. Having never faced big-time competition, he'll need some tutoring, but the Niners have had some luck with small-school corners.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.5**

1990 DRAFT round number (pick in round; overall sequence): 1. (28,25) DEXTER CARTER, RB, Florida State; 2. (22,47) DENNIS BROWN, DT, Washington; 2. (28,53) ERIC DAVIS, DB, Jacksonville State (Ala.); 3. (15,68) RON LEWIS, WR, Florida State; 4. (8,92) DEAN CALIGUIRE, C, Pittsburgh; 6. (28,165) FRANK POLLACK, OT, Northern Arizona; 8. (28,220) DWIGHT PICKENS, WR, Fresno State; 9. (28,248) ODELL HAGGINS, DT, Florida State; 10. (28,276) MARTIN HARRISON, DE, Washington; 11. (13,289) ANTHONY SHELTON, DB, Tennessee State.

T.Q.©70.5

VETERANS ROSTER

NO.	NAME	POS.	HT.	WT.	BIRTH-DATE	COLLEGE	NFL EXP.
79	Barton, H.	T	6-4	280	4/19/64	North Carolina	4
65	Bregel, J.	G	6-4	280	5/1/64	Southern Cal	4
31	Brooks, C.	S	5-11	191	1/1/66	Texas A&M	3
64	Burt, J.	NT	6-1	260	6/7/59	Miami (Fla.)	10
95	Carter, M.	NT	6-2	285	10/29/60	SMU	7
6	Cofer, M.	K	6-1	190	2/19/64	North Carolina	3
69	Collie, B.	G-T	6-6	275	6/27/62	Texas-Arlington	6
38	*Cox, G.	LB	6-0	217	1/6/65	San Jose State	3
33	Craig, R	RB	6-0	214	7/10/60	Nebraska	8
59	DeLong, K.	LB	6-2	235	8/14/67	Tennessee	2
28	*Dixon, H.	S	6-0	185	12/25/58	Southern Miss	10
75	Fagan, K.	DE	6-4	265	4/25/63	Miami (Fla.)	4
55	Fahnhorst, J.	LB	6-4	230	11/8/58	Minnesota	7
98	Goss, A	LB	6-4	228	8/11/66	North Carolina	2
29	Griffin, D.	CB	6-0	176	3/17/64	Middle Tenn. State	5
94	Haley, C.	LB-DE	6-5	230	1/6/64	James Madison	5
9	Helton, B.	P	6-3	205	1/2/65	Colorado	3
30	Henderson, K.	FB	6-1	220	8/4/66	Georgia	2
56	Hendrickson, S.	LB	6-0	245	8/30/66	California	2
78	Holt, P	DE	6-4	280	1/1/62	Angelo State	3
84	Jones, B.	TE	6-4	230	2/12/63	Santa Clara	4
57	Kennedy, S.	LB	6-3	235	7/10/64	San Jose State	2
42	Lott, R.	S	6-0	200	5/8/59	Southern Cal	10
62	McIntyre, G.	G	6-3	265	2/17/61	Georgia	7
54	Millen, M.	LB	6-2	245	3/12/58	Penn State	11
16	Montana, J.	QB	6-2	195	6/11/56	Notre Dame	12
77	Pans, W.	T	6-6	299	10/6/60	Michigan	8
26	Pollard, D.	CB	5-11	187	5/11/64	Weber State	4
57	*Radloff, W.	C	6-5	277	5/17/61	Georgia	6
44	Rathman, T.	FB	6-1	232	10/7/62	Nebraska	5
80	Rice, J.	WR	6-2	200	10/13/62	Miss. Valley State	6
91	Roberts, L.	DE	6-3	275	6/2/63	Alabama	5
53	Romanowski, B.	LB	6-4	231	4/2/66	Boston College	3
61	Sapolu, J.	C-G	6-4	260	3/10/61	Hawaii	5
71	*Shannon, J.	DE	6-3	270	1/18/65	Kentucky	3
88	Sherrard, M.	WR	6-2	187	6/21/63	UCLA	2
72	*Smerlas, F.	NT	6-4	291	4/8/57	Boston College	12
66	Tausch, T.	G	6-5	276	2/5/59	Texas	9
82	Taylor, J.	WR	6-1	185	3/31/62	Delaware State	4
60	Thomas, C.	C-G	6-3	280	12/24/60	Oklahoma	5
23	Tillman, S.	RB	5-11	206	4/21/64	Oklahoma	4
58	Turner, K.	LB	6-2	222	10/22/58	Purdue	11
74	Wallace, S.	T	6-5	276	12/27/64	Auburn	5
89	Walls, W.	TE	6-5	246	2/26/66	Mississippi	2
99	Walter, M.	LB	6-3	238	11/30/60	Oregon	8
43	*Waymer, D.	S	6-1	188	7/1/58	Notre Dame	11
81	Williams, J.	TE	6-4	245	2/25/60	Nebraska	8
85	Wilson, M.	WR	6-3	215	12/19/58	Washington State	10
21	Wright, E.	CB	6-1	185	4/18/59	Missouri	9
8	Young, S.	QB	6-2	200	10/11/61	Brigham Young	6

*Plan B free agent

LOS ANGELES RAMS

1989 RECORD: 11-5 HEAD COACH: JOHN ROBINSON STADIUM: ANAHEIM (69,008)

When coach John Robinson celebrated his 55th birthday in late July, no doubt his wish was that the San Francisco 49ers would disappear forever from the face of the earth. At least from the NFC West. In a world devoid of 49ers, it's fair to say that the Rams — who have gone from embraceable ewes to outright Rambos under Robinson — would have an outstanding chance to rule the NFL kingdom.

Despite trailing the 49ers in NFC West standings eight of the last nine years — including finishing second to the 49ers three of the last four seasons and six times since 1980 — the cry "wait until next year" isn't a hollow one. San Francisco, 24-3 since bottoming out at 6-5 midway through the 1988 campaign, can blame the Rams for two of their losses. It would have been three, if not for a blown 17-point lead to the 49ers on Dec. 11.

In 1989's Disney-esque roller coaster ride, the Southern Californians took off with five straight wins, dipped to four straight losses, then climbed to their most victories (13) since 1978 by winning six of their last seven. Los Angeles mounted five comeback wins and took two of three in overtime. Ah, but after a five-game road winning streak (over New Orleans, Dallas and New England; then Philadelphia and the Giants in the playoffs), the 49ers crushed the road warrior (weary) Rams, 30-3, in the NFC Championship Game. It was the third straight NFC title game the Rams had gone without a touchdown.

With nearly 10 wins a season since his arrival in 1983, Robinson must develop some young offensive linemen, revamp the running game (hello, Curt Warner) and tinker with a 21st-ranked defense. Then all he needs is the NFL's realignment — and an AFC East home for the 49ers.

WIDE RECEIVERS/ TIGHT END

Great relationships are precarious in the glitzy, ersatz world of La-La Land. Arsenio and Paula are yesterday's news. Madonna and Warren, kaput. Prince and Kim? Probably ancient history by now. That's why it's imperative the Rams take full advantage of Henry Ellard and Willie "Flipper" Anderson, before the two discover that there's only one football. In 1989, the duo combined for 114 catches, 2,528 yards and 13 touchdowns, despite missing seven starts between them. They also became the first receivers in club history to each gain more than 1,000 yards in the same season.

Ellard (70 for 1,137 yards) didn't have sprinter's speed eight years ago, and hasn't gotten any faster. What he can do is lull corners to sleep and then burst by them with sneaky acceleration. Ellard will drop some catchable balls, but his concentration has improved immensely. His patterns are much crisper, and there's no one quicker nor more athletic on the after-catch, first-move pivot. With all of offensive coordinator Ernie Zampese's options and route conversions, Ellard can flat-out take over a game. He adjusts extremely well on long balls and runs crisp short and intermediate routes.

Anderson (44 for 1,146 yards) burst into the public consciousness with an unbelievable league-record 336 receiving yards on 15 catches in an overtime win in New Orleans. Flipper is fast, fluid and can come down with the ball over the middle. An excellent athlete with only rudimentary recognition skills, Anderson isn't as technically sound as Ellard but has more big-play and deep-strike potential (his 26-yard average catch topped the league). What he doesn't do well is "sit down" between zone defenders, nor break off routes well, preferring to take everything deep. He also needs to improve his first-step move to avoid pressing corners. He was more effective out of motion or in the slot.

Aaron Cox, who started 15 games in 1988, was slowed in '89 by a preseason hamstring injury. Cox is a super-quick, competitive athlete who gets in and out of his cuts effortlessly. He separates from defenders and has displayed big-strike capability. A starter for most teams, Cox should force Zampese into a lot of three-wideout looks. He reads rotations well and, lined up in the slot, could be murder on single-coverage secondaries.

At tight end, resourceful Pete Holohan had 50-plus receptions for the second straight year. Whether flexed or in tight, Holohan gets into the 12-yard hook-up zones quickly. A so-so blocker, he is especially effective in crossing and delay patterns near the goal line. Damone Johnson has better deep speed than Holohan and on early downs brings some crushing in-line blocking to the two-tight end look. **GRADE** (max. 10): **8.0**

OFFENSIVE LINE

For the past four seasons, the Rams have had no fewer than three offensive linemen voted to the Pro Bowl. There are signs, though, that the club's trademark area of strength, which carved the way for a seventh straight season featuring a 1,000-yard rusher, is cracking. Assuming that Duval Love replaces Tony Slaton (lost to Dallas, Plan B) at right guard, LA's starting unit will average 31 years of age and 10 years of NFL experience. Right tackle Jackie Slater has played in 194 straight games and center Doug Smith, with 60 straight starts, hasn't missed a game since 1985. Streaks can't go on forever, and some contingency plans are needed.

Slater, a six-time Pro Bowl player, and left tackle Irv Pankey give the Rams one of the wiliest tackle pairings in league history. With knee bend, flexibility and quickness now just fleeting memories, both have turned to a seemingly bottomless bag of tricks. Pankey can still occasionally knock a defender back on his heels, but Slater, always the better pass protector of the duo, has become more a seal-off, positioning blocker on the run. He still has a decent drop and setup, but he's somewhat stiff, no longer has the good hands to lock out people and now plays a bit high. He has problems against speed-rush ends, especially those with good inside moves. Pankey likes to get into a rusher's body and control his flow. Although Pankey's concentration has gotten better over the years (translation: fewer busts), his once-amazing mobility is mostly in evidence on counter plays.

Left guard Tom Newberry, another Pro Bowler, has started all but two games since coming to the Rams in 1986. He shuffles smoothly to the outside and has super recognition/glide on blitz pickups, but can be beaten on the inside gap. Because of his size (6-2, 285), hand speed and knee bend, Newberry delivers one of the best rising blows around. He traps well, particularly on the slow sucker play, and pulls with a burst, using 4.8 speed and adjustment on the move to get out quickly and find his target. Newberry has a textbook base and great balance. Nicks and bruises have slowed him, but he's a talented player with many years ahead.

Super-squat Love has the quickness but lacks toughness. He isn't going to unbuckle any chin straps. He's a decent pass protector, doing a fair job redirecting from his right guard post. He'll be challenged by Plan B acquisition Joe Milinichik, who started two years for the Lions. Not very athletic, Milinichik is nevertheless a hump-busting worker with excellent lower-body strength and drive.

Center Doug Smith, a Pro Bowler each of the past six seasons, needs help more frequently than in the past, especially against odd-man fronts. Smith remains a crafty technician who gets by on awareness, recognition skills and grittiness. Entering his 13th season, he's begun to play a bit high, but he still makes nifty adjustments and is an accomplished combination blocker. Smith's problem is that he doesn't lock on and sustain and slips off too many blocks. He also doesn't seal off the back-side — a no-no in the club's cutback scheme — like he once did.

If either Pankey or Slater falters, Robert Cox, a big-framed strongman with decent feet and a nice setup, is ready for full-time duty. **GRADE** (max. 10): **7.5**

QUARTERBACK

Jim Everett finally has mastered the physical and mental demands of Zampese's timing/touch/control offense. His awareness, recognition skills and audible sense have grown tremendously. Finishing as the NFL's third-rated passer, he threw for a club-record 4,310 yards and a league-high 29 touchdowns, and posted single-game career bests in passing yards, completions and attempts. Over the past two seasons, no NFL quarterback has been as prolific. Even a skittish performance in the NFC Championship Game — and a slight midseason regression in some throwing mechanics — has not damaged his stock.

Some sterling two-minute efforts last year attested to Everett's intelligence and natural leadership. He has learned to harness his arm strength, and now concentrates on driving the ball neatly into the 20-yard zones, letting his receivers pick up the additional real estate. Although his release isn't hair-trigger, he compensates with timing and three-step drops. He has one of the league's tightest spirals and can be deadly accurate. He's a good-sized athlete who's improved his footwork and ability to throw from the half-roll.

Mark Herrmann is the consummate touch passer, knows the system and accepts his role. Former Lions starter Chuck Long brings a damaged psyche to the West Coast. He has good size, decent mobility, a quick release and favors the underneath passing game — all attributes that could serve him well in Zampese's system.

GRADE (max. 10): **8.0**

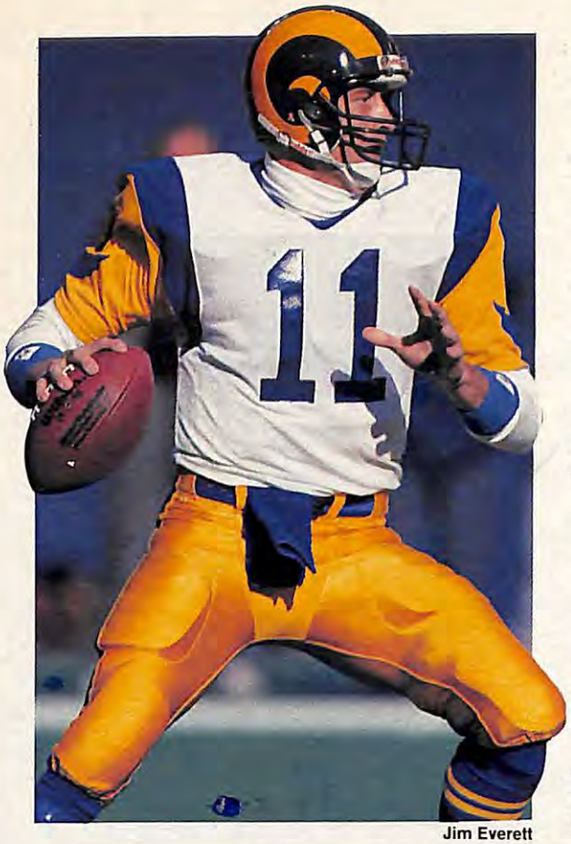
RUNNING BACKS

In 1990, the Rams' one-runner ways may yield to a tailback-by-committee scheme, along with a promise of more two-back sets to take advantage of underworked Cleveland Gary and Robert Delpino.

Los Angeles hopes Curt Warner, acquired from Seattle via Plan B, has enough left in his surgically repaired legs to head that tailback committee. With just one 1,000-yard season in the last three years, his 631 yards in '89 reinforced claims that Warner is worn out. His per-carry average has slid each year (4.6, 4.2, 3.9, 3.3) since '86. Warner always has lacked breakaway speed, but seems to fit the Rams' emphasis on cutback-style running, *if* his trademark razor breaks and lateral quickness are intact. Playing behind a quality line should help; in Seattle, Warner wasted his best moves dodging tacklers 4 yards behind scrimmage. Running between the tackles, Warner's balance and ability to find the seam could buy a second life, especially if he's spotted. With only adequate receiving skills, he's not a third-down situational player.

Despite back-to-back 1,000-yard seasons in LA, Greg Bell's attitude and contract demands probably will earn him his third NFL address. If not, Bell provides good moves, hands, durability and production. A one-time pick-runner who tiptoed into piles, Bell now spots an opening and goes for it. He cuts efficiently, can roar back against the grain and has developed into a decent blocker. He runs tall, but has good balance and fits the Rams' schemes very well. First-round pick Gaston Green, after 190 yards rushing in two seasons, doesn't fit. He is fluid and has good acceleration, both straight-ahead and laterally, but wants to turn every play into a sweep. He also can't stay healthy.

Displacing reliable fullback Buford McGee, to give Delpino and Gary more time, won't be easy. McGee is a bone-rattling lead blocker with very little ego. He'd be the last person to point out that in three seasons with the Rams, he's carried the ball just 46 times. A back with a lineman's mentality, McGee leads the sweep well and picks up blitzes adequately. He's also an accomplished short-yardage receiver (37 catches in '89).



Jim Everett

The team's second-leading rusher in '89, Delpino is a brute in short-yardage and goal-line situations. He can also catch (34 receptions) and is a potentially slashing runner with some quickness and elusiveness. Gary has great hands, is a superior blocker and a load for tacklers. He needs more than 37 carries ('89).

GRADE (max. 10): **6.0**

DEFENSIVE LINE Despite a base 3-4 alignment, in most situations the Rams play only two down linemen. Given the team's depth, two bodies may be all they can rustle up.

Alvin Wright, a smash-mouth stuffer usually found at nose tackle, emerged as the mainstay of the unit, starting all 16 games and leading down linemen with 63 tackles. Wright is a square-bodied brawler, more in the classic two-gap mold. He gets decent penetration, uses his hands well and occasionally can cave in a blocking scheme. Wright is a bullish pass rusher who garnered three sacks last year in limited opportunities.

With the loss of Shawn Miller to Plan B (Green Bay), Doug Reed becomes the senior member of the line. He played 11 games in '89 before going down with an ankle injury. Reed has his moments (3 sacks in '89), but remains a fairly unpolished player, a guy with only so-so strength and average movement. He can be tough against the run.

Reed will be challenged by up-and-coming youngsters Mike Piel and Bill Hawkins. Piel lacks size and upper-body strength, but plays faster than his 40 times and is the consummate overachiever. He recorded four sacks in '89, using a good uppercut move and decent swim technique. Against the run, he dares people to root him out of a hole. Hawkins is a much more pure pass-rush threat, with good upfield speed and closing ability. He has long arms, good pursuit and a knack for knifing between blockers. A bit narrow through the middle, Hawkins has a nice spinoff move but must learn to vary his technique. A few more pounds would serve him well, too. Like Piel, he was nicked in '89, finishing the season on IR with a knee injury.

Brian Smith wasn't activated until the club's late-season rash of injuries. A classic 'tweener, Smith is a pure speed rusher. Former Bear Sean Smith has good size and will get a look.

GRADE (max. 10): **4.0**

LINEBACKERS When healthy, the Rams can field nearly two full starting linebacking units. Although Fritz Shurmur's pure "Eagle" look will be scrapped, the defense still will revolve around the LBs, who accounted for 31 of the team's 42 sacks in '89, many off a four-linebacker rushing package. With constant disruption of blocking patterns and constant pressure, LA finished fifth against the run.

Strongside linebacker Kevin Greene netted 16½ quarterback kills for the second consecutive year. Greene is stiff, unathletic and non-instinctive dropping into coverage, but point him toward the backfield and he's a crazed man, hell-bent on disrupting the passer. Greene's first step is a threat to the quickest of tackles. He often lines up very wide in an effort to distort blocking angles. He has deceptive strength and handles most tight ends, though he's better chasing than playing the point.

Fellow outside 'backer Mike Wilcher also turns defensive end on many passing downs. Injuries over the past two years have diminished his speed, but he still can put together streaks that rival Greene's. Wilcher has above-average mobility and plays the point with strength and savvy, though he allows himself to get outflanked.

Because of injuries, starting inside linebackers Larry Kelm and Fred Strickland didn't play a single down together until the 10th week last season. Strickland has excellent athletic ability, range and pursuit. However, it now appears he's too small to play "nosebacker" in the "Eagle" defense. Although his coverage skills are raw — remember, we're talking about someone who plays nose tackle, linebacker and now you want him to cover the pass? —Strickland has fluid reverse and lateral movements. He's physical and intense and, while not the pure stuffer type, makes a lot of plays. Kelm has bulked up to the 240 range, but relies more on moxie than muscle. A stiff-looking player who struggles in man coverage, and whose range is basically tackle-to-tackle, Kelm hits from a solid base, shoulders squared. He's best stepping up and filling.

When injuries hit hard, Mel Owens and Frank Stams filled in on the inside. Stams' pure pass-rush abilities could get him another shot outside. Owens can unload on ball-carriers but gets separated too easily in man coverage. On the outside, George Bethune and Brett Faryniarz doubled as down linemen in nickel schemes. Both are quick, upfield rushers. Faryniarz has a good burst; Bethune is better disengaging blockers.

GRADE (max. 10): **7.0**

DEFENSIVE BACKS With the 1988 departures of Nolan Cromwell and Johnnie Johnson, 1989 was a painful transition year. Despite decent upfront pressure, the secondary led the way to a last-place finish in pass defense. Opponents completed nearly 60 percent of their passes and averaged 251.5 yards per game. With LeRoy Irvin released in the offseason, the transition continues in 1990.

The cornerstone of the backfield, veteran left corner Jerry Gray, likely will be switched to free safety. There, his excellent range and ability to move on the ball in the air (6 interceptions, 23 passes defensed) will be better utilized. Gray doesn't turn well with speed receivers, but is a sleuth playing zone. He's alert, intelligent and has the size to force.

The early-line favorites at corner are former Jets starter Bobby Humphery, acquired in a draft-day trade, and Darryl Henley, who played in 15 games in 1989. Humphery doesn't turn and go well — at times he looks like his former wide receiver self — but has excellent makeup speed. The instincts are still not there, nor the run support. As a rookie, Henley displayed quick feet, a good backpedal and catch-up burst when tracking receivers in nickel coverages. Teams took advantage of his limited recognition skills, as well as his lack of coordination with corners and safeties. At 5-9, teams try to lob over Henley; at 170 pounds, they try to run over him.

Few are going to trample strong safety Michael Stewart, who finished third among Rams tacklers. He lacks pure coverage skills but does a decent job reading and reacting. He's a fluid athlete and a punishing hitter who likes to play up close and get nasty. Vince Newsome is another thumper. Stiff in coverage, he started at free safety last year and gives the Rams insurance if Gray returns to corner. Rookie corner Alfred Jackson, a former wideout, showed surprising instincts in nickel and dime coverages, and will get a longer look.

GRADE (max. 10): **4.5**

SPECIAL TEAMS Clutch kicker Mike Lansford won two more games last season with last-minute field goals. He's been reliable over his eight seasons (48 of 54 inside 30 yards) and last year was 23 of 26 from inside 49 yards. But he's no Nick Lowery beyond the 50 (0 for 4 last year; 4 for 17 career). Former CFLer Hank Ilesic (San Diego, Plan B) averaged 40.1 yards (32.9) in his inaugural NFL season, but nailed only 11 balls inside the 20. He didn't earn the nickname "The Shank" for nothing.

With Ron Brown lost via Plan B (Raiders), the return units lack explosiveness. Punt retriever Henley averaged 9.5 yards on 28 returns, but also had 19 fair catches, fourth-most in the league. Coverage teams were mediocre.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.5**

COACHING/ ORGANIZATION Robinson remains an excellent motivator and players' favorite, despite management's oft tight-fisted ways. In coordinators Ernie Zampese (offense) and Fritz Shurmur (defense) the staff features two of the game's premier minds. Zampese rebuffed overtures from Atlanta while Shurmur was seriously considered for the Phoenix head coaching job.

The front office lacks an astute football man, now that Jack Faulkner is essentially a figurehead. The top of the staff chart looks like something from *L.A. Law*, with vice president/attorneys John Shaw and Jay Zygmunt. Shaw is too bottom-line. Despite their success, the Rams still rate among the NFL's five lowest-paying teams. Sooner or later, that catches up to you.

GRADE (max. 10): **7.5**

DRAFT The Rams filled needs using three of their first four picks on Pac-10 products. Brostek, who failed one physical (balky back), is a brawling, thick-bodied bulldozer who should eventually replace Doug Smith. Terrell has nice range and is slated for nickel packages. Berry, a running back at Oregon, will take his speed and explosiveness to cornerback. Wideout Stallworth has big-play ability and should stick. Punter Elmore will challenge Ilesic.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.0**

1990 DRAFT round number (pick in round; overall sequence): 1. (25,23) BERN BROSTEK, C, Washington; 2. (24,49) PAT TERRELL, DB, Notre Dame; 3. (25,78) LATIN BERRY, RB, Oregon; 6. (24,161) TIM STALLWORTH, WR, Washington State; 7. (25,190) KENT ELMORE, P, Tennessee; 8. (5,198) RAY SAVAGE, LB, Virginia; 8. (24,216) ELBERT CRAWFORD, C, Arkansas; 9. (25,245) TONY LOMACK, WR, Florida; 10. (24,272) STEVE BATES, DE, James Madison; 11. (25,301) BILL GOLDBERG, DT, Georgia; 12. (24,328) DAVID LANG, RB, Northern Arizona.

T.Q.©63.0

VETERANS ROSTER

NO.	NAME	POS.	HT.	WT.	BIRTH-DATE	COLLEGE	NFL EXP.
83	Anderson, W.	WR	6-0	172	3/7/65	UCLA	3
42	Bell, G.	RB	5-11	210	8/1/62	Notre Dame	7
57	Bethune, G.	LB	6-4	240	3/30/67	Alabama	2
88	Carter, P.	TE	6-4	250	8/1/66	Florida State	3
84	Cox, A.	WR	5-9	178	3/13/65	Arizona State	3
72	Cox, R.	T	6-5	285	12/30/63	UCLA	4
14	Craig, P.	WR	5-10	170	2/2/65	UCLA	2
39	Delpino, R.	RB	6-0	205	11/2/65	Missouri	3
80	Ellard, H.	WR	5-11	182	7/21/61	Fresno State	8
11	Everett, J.	QB	6-5	212	1/3/63	Purdue	5
51	Faryniarz, B.	LB	6-3	235	7/23/65	San Diego State	3
43	Gary, C.	RB	6-0	226	5/4/66	Miami (Fla.)	2
25	Gray, J.	CB	6-0	185	12/2/62	Texas	6
30	Green, G.	RB	5-11	192	8/1/66	UCLA	3
91	Greene, K.	LB	6-3	250	7/31/62	Auburn	6
70	Hawkins, B.	DT	6-6	266	5/9/66	Miami (Fla.)	2
20	Henley, D.	CB	5-9	170	10/30/66	UCLA	2
9	Herrmann, M.	QB	6-4	202	1/9/59	Purdue	10
28	Hicks, C.	CB	5-10	188	8/18/64	Oregon	4
81	Holohan, P.	TE	6-4	232	7/25/59	Notre Dame	10
48	Humphery, B.	CB	5-10	180	8/23/61	New Mexico State	8
8	Ilesic, H.	P	6-1	210	9/7/59	None	2
31	Jackson, A.	CB	6-0	177	7/10/67	San Diego State	2
86	Johnson, D.	TE	6-4	250	3/2/62	Cal Poly SLO	5
52	Kelm, L.	LB	6-4	240	11/29/64	Texas A&M	4
1	Lansford, M.	K	6-0	190	7/20/58	Washington	9
16	Long, C.	QB	6-4	221	2/18/63	Iowa	5
67	Love, D.	G	6-3	287	6/24/63	UCLA	6
90	McDonald, M.	LB	6-1	235	6/22/58	Southern Cal	6
24	McGee, B.	FB	6-0	210	8/16/60	Mississippi	7
71	*Milinichik, J.	G	6-5	275	3/30/63	N.C. State	4
66	Newberry, T.	G	6-2	285	12/20/62	Wisconsin-LaCrosse	5
26	Newman, A.	S	6-0	199	11/25/65	Oregon	3
22	Newsome, V.	S	6-1	185	1/22/61	Washington	8
58	Owens, M.	LB	6-2	240	12/7/58	Michigan	10
75	Pankey, I.	T	6-5	295	2/15/58	Penn State	11
95	Piel, M.	DT	6-4	263	9/21/65	Illinois	3
93	Reed, D.	DE	6-3	265	7/16/60	San Diego State	7
	Sanchez, L.	CB	5-10	190	10/28/61	UCLA	4
78	Slater, J.	T	6-4	285	5/27/54	Jackson State	15
96	Smith, B.	LB-DT	6-6	242	4/23/66	Auburn	2
56	Smith, D.	C	6-3	272	11/25/56	Bowling Green	13
97	Smith, S.	DT	6-4	275	3/27/65	Grambling	4
50	Stams, F.	LB	6-2	240	7/17/65	Notre Dame	2
23	Stewart, M.	S	6-0	195	7/12/65	Fresno State	4
53	Strickland, F.	LB	6-2	250	8/15/66	Purdue	3
21	*Warner, C.	RB	5-11	205	3/18/61	Penn State	8
54	Wilcher, M.	LB	6-3	245	3/20/60	North Carolina	8
99	Wright, A.	NT	6-2	285	2/5/61	Jacksonville St.	5

*Plan B free agent

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

1989 RECORD: 9-7 HEAD COACH: JIM MORA STADIUM: LOUISIANA SUPERDOME (69,065)

Rebuilding or revamping? Innovation or renovation? Will the Saints go marching out of the playoffs for the third time in four seasons? Despite fashioning a 31-16 record over the past three regular seasons — second only to Super Bowl Champion San Francisco's 37-10 mark — New Orleans is at a crossroads. Not even a closing 41-6 rout of the Colts, capping a three-game win streak, will ensure coach Jim Mora's ultraconservative philosophy a reprieve from ultracritical reviews. Welcome to the Big Uneasy.

Mora will continue to patch leaks with baling wire and glue instead of a wrecking ball. He has little choice. A quarterback change does seem inevitable (Bobby Hebert wants out), but that leaves a scatterarm of Arena Football vintage, John Fourcade, to steer the Saints to the promised land. The defensive line is minus two starters and a rebuilt secondary can't continue to allow 241-plus yards per game.

Finally, 10 of the Saints' 22 starters were 28 or older. It showed when they squandered second-half leads (24-7) to Green Bay, (14-3) to Washington, (17-3) to San Francisco and (17-3) to Los Angeles, In those four losses, New Orleans was overwhelmed 45-13 in the fourth quarter, an indication that new faces are needed and that Mora must keep his ball-control beliefs from promoting stagnation.

WIDE RECEIVERS/ TIGHT END

In 1989, the Saints ranked slightly above league averages in yards per pass attempt, per completion and per pass, and finished an NFL-13th in passing yardage. But few teams challenged the deep seams less than the Saints. Mora's non-elastic, pop-gun passing game lives in the 10- to 15-yard range.

Eric Martin is a perfect fit for this team. Since 1987, he has been the Saints' best receiver, averaging 66 catches and 983 yards (14.9) per season. A big, muscular target (6-1, 207) with a tight end mentality — including limited speed and maneuverability — he breaks most first-tackle attempts. Despite his rough routes, he is a fearless operator between the hashmarks and knows where the chains are, as well as the end zone (22 touchdowns in 3 years). Realizing the Saints seldom go deep, corners generally crowd him at the line, yet Martin is adept at muscling or deking his way past the initial chuck. He's a tough downfield blocker.

Lonzell Hill tailed off in '89. Though hardly frail at 5-11 and 189 pounds, he was constantly pounded while breaking underneath, and his receptions dropped from 66 to 48. Hill has quick feet, good hands and runs the seam well, but doesn't have enough separation speed to adequately complement Martin.

Brett Perriman, the team blazer, has just 36 receptions in two NFL seasons. Fast enough to singe any corner and averaging 17.8 yards per catch, he lacks recognition and feel and, some days, heart. His speed is strictly straight-line. While Floyd Turner is quick and has good hands, his rookie season (22 receptions in 11 games) was abbreviated by a broken arm. An intriguing newcomer is Gerald Alphin (6-3, 220), a former CFL all-star who caught 199 passes in three seasons up north.

Veteran tight ends Hoby Brenner and John Tice may move like glaciers, but they can carve out a valley for running backs. New Orleans likes to run a lot of multiple tight end looks to keep the off-tackle plays open. Brenner is a sufficient pass receiver (34 catches, 11.7) but began to collect nicks. Entering his third season, youngster Greg Scales has the deep speed and hands to tempt some downfield options.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.0**

OFFENSIVE LINE

Reshuffling and getting acquainted contributed to a 50 percent rise in sacks allowed (36). But with everyone healthy, the Saints have decent talent and even better depth.

Left guard Brad Edelman's ailments directly led to what proved to be a blessing. In rookie Kevin Haverdink, the Saints uncovered a raw-boned player who could start at a key position (left tackle, protecting the quarterback's blind side) for the next decade. He does not abound in athletic skill, nor is he fast, flexible or a smooth knee-bender. And he did struggle at times. But his tenacity and willingness to work prevailed. He was yanked inside too often, yet displayed good quickness and straight-ahead explosion off the ball. His setup and overall mirror-and-slide techniques are rough, but once he gets into a defensive lineman, he can lock 'em out. Best yet, he allowed veteran Jim Dombrowski to move to guard, which further strengthened this unit.

Dombrowski looked more comfortable at left guard than he did at tackle. He played lighter by about 10 pounds and showed more strength, stamina and smarts. With improved footwork, he led the Saints' infrequent sweeps, while his savvy helped disguise traps. With long arms and balance, he's an effective pass blocker.

Right tackle Stan Brock, rebounding from knee ligament damage, started every game in '89, but his fire is dimming. A 10-year performer, he has good hand command, now relies on leverage and usually grades pretty consistently, though speed rushers are getting the better of his pass-block cushion. Still, he's big, strong, aggressive and isn't through yet.

Right guard Steve Trapilo (6-5, 281) has ideal size but was inconsistent. He can handle the one-on-one blocks, yet lacks agility, doesn't move his feet well and, at times, tries too hard. He prefers the slugger image, but more concentration and technique are the answers.

Too many times, Trapilo left center Joel Hilgenberg hanging. Hilgenberg started 12 games after Steve Korte was injured. Isolated against bigger nose tackles, he can be bounced around like a pinball. But he is active and doesn't make mistakes. A bulldog by nature, Korte can go mask-to-mask with most nose men. He has great lower-body strength and is a strong area and seal-off blocker. Korte and Edelman should make serious bids to regain starting jobs. Edelman's best days are behind him, though he remains a valuable swing man.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.0**

QUARTERBACK

There was a time when it would have been heresy to suggest bayou bomber Bobby Hebert step down as the Saints starter. These days, Hebert would rather be a Raider. Now it's John Fourcade who's the early favorite to start.

Fourcade had a torrid final three games, completing 54 of 90 passes for 829 yards and seven TDs with three interceptions, though the defense was the biggest factor in those three victories. If there is an organized pro league, this 29-year-old vagabond has been there, including CFL, USFL, NFL, NFL replacement games and Arena Football. A Joe Kapp reincarnated, he is a gritty competitor who makes as many plays with his feet as his strong arm. Problem is (1) when no one is open, he'd rather run than find a secondary receiver; and (2) when he does find a bullseye, he's apt to miss the whole target. He doesn't drive the ball well, but won't force things, either. He'd rather pick, pick, pick underneath, and that's what the Saints want. He has a good feel for the running game and isn't afraid of punishment, but it's tough to build around such an erratic performer.

Hebert has a better arm, touch and size. But despite the team's 26-15 record since he became a starter in 1987, and despite reasonable effectiveness (NFC-fourth 82.7 QB rating last year), Hebert is miscast as a ball-control general in Mora's offense. A streak shooter, he can rack up incompletions and interceptions just as quickly (career 53/48 TD/interception ratio). Once he gets inside the 20, he runs out of field and throwing options. Not known for his mental toughness, teams realize if they bounce him around early he may never get on track.

After two seasons of inactivity, Dave Wilson has become little more than a clipboard jockey. Super-bright Jason Garrett could be interesting, considering Fourcade's age and Hebert's uncertainty.

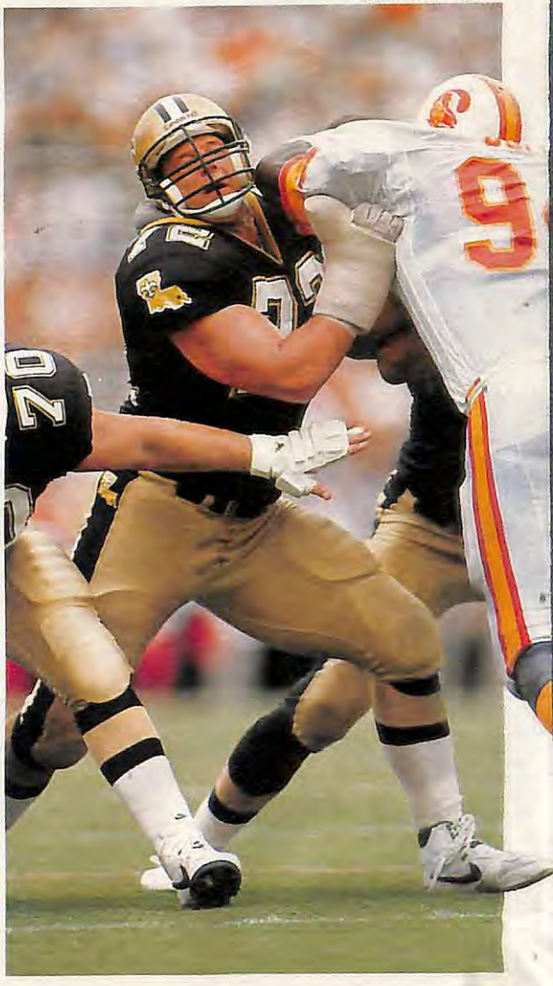
GRADE (max. 10): **5.0**

RUNNING BACKS

Rueben Mayes was too wounded and Craig "Ironhead" Heyward too fat and unmotivated. But luckily for the Saints, Dalton Hilliard, the little locomotive who could — and did — was too much. At 5-8, 204, Hilliard ran for 1,262 yards, caught 52 passes for 514 yards and led the league in touchdowns with 18. He accounted for one-third of the Saints' total offense, but if you include incomplete passes, he was involved in 42 percent of offensive snaps. A great cutback runner with tremendous vision, balance and natural body lean, Hilliard is the NFL's premier bumper car. His piston-driving thighs and strong shoulders punish half-hearted tacklers. At his best on cutback sweeps and counter action, he has in-line quickness and enough speed to break things loose. He's an excellent receiver (52 catches, 9.9 average), an adequate blocker and saves his best for the fourth quarter.

Unspectacular Buford Jordan is a dependable back,

Jim Dombrowski



solid blocker and strong inside runner. He doesn't have the outside dash but catches well enough. If Heyward, who has yet to live up to his No. 1 draft status, can keep his waistline in bounds — he was 20-25 pounds lighter in minicamp — he's a formidable piledriver who can outrace linebackers to the corner. With a nose-tackle body and tailback mentality, he's incredibly agile for someone 5-11 and 260 pounds. He can block adequately, but with only a handful of carries a game and poor pass-catching credentials, he's another player perhaps miscast in the Saints system. He's certainly an intriguing one-back possibility.

For Mayes, 1990 is the year of truth, or consequences. Knee ailments, and more recently, Achilles problems, shut down his '89 season and have cast doubts on his talent. When right, Mayes is faster than Hilliard and a slasher who can put away the pass. CFL fullback Gill Fenerty runs hard between the tackles.

GRADE (max. 10): **7.0**

DEFENSIVE LINE Last season the Saints owned the NFL's stingiest run defense (82.9 yards per game) and increased their sacks 52 percent (to 47). With two of three regulars gone, it'll be a tough act to follow.

Gone are starting ends James "Jumpy" Geathers, who had knee problems, and Frank Warren (9½ of the line's 17 sacks), who received a lifetime suspension under the league's substance-abuse policy. Geathers and backup nose tackle Pat Swoopes both went to Washington via Plan B. Obviously, the coaches would have preferred breaking in youngsters Wayne Martin and Michael Simmons a bit slower.

At left end, Martin (6-5, 275), a first-round pick in '89, is the key. He has a good initial burst and excellent closing speed. But when he doesn't beat the tackle with his first move, he tends to stay engaged. Against the run, he must prove he can hold his ground and funnel the action to the linebackers, or strip the interference, as Warren did. At the other end, Simmons and Plan B acquisition Tony Woods (Chicago) are developmental-type players with little experience (3 years combined) and even less playing time. They'll have to grow up in a hurry.

In his first year at nose tackle, James Wilks performed admirably. Hardly the prototype inside stuffer, Wilks (6-5) is a bit tall for the position and can be an easy mark for set-and-post blocks. Wilks does use his hands well and holds his ground against centers. If the Saints can find a decent replacement, he could move back to end to ease that critical situation. **GRADE** (max. 10): **3.5**

LINEBACKERS If it ain't broke, don't fix it. New Orleans has one of the league's foremost linebacking corps, so don't look for an infusion of new, younger talent despite starters who average 29 or older. When an auto accident sidelined Rickey Jackson early in the season, and when Pat Swilling missed virtually all of training camp with contract woes, it became apparent just how important the Saints linebackers were to the team's overall success. The two didn't get their football legs until the team was 2-4, then broke loose for 24 of the club's 47 sacks while the Saints won four of five, seven of the final 10.

Although four-time Pro Bowler Jackson is still a productive speed rusher, Swilling has developed into the star. A relentless upfield sprinter/rusher — against the Falcons, coaches counted an amazing 50 times he was in their backfield — Swilling is a human heat-seeking missile. His success (team-record 16½ sacks) revolves around quick moves and beating the tackle around the corner. He's also adept at causing fumbles by raking the quarterback's arms. He wins his share of scrimmage head-ons, but his lateral speed makes him a great chaser. When called upon, he has the reverse gear to get him into the outside passing lanes.

Jackson may make his home in Kenner, La., but he lives in opposing backfields. A pedal-to-the-metal big-play maker, Jackson closes on quarterbacks like a swooping hawk looking for his next meal. Despite losing a step over the years, and his second-lowest sack total (7½) in nine seasons, he's no less nightmare for offensive tackles. Never one to hit the playbook or the weight room, he plays the run tougher than Swilling and takes on lead blockers well. He has a great feel for the game.

Inside linebacker Vaughan Johnson is the enforcer and may be the best 3-4 inside linebacker today. Even with modest nose-tackle support, Johnson moves well behind the line, hits with jackhammer force and plays much bigger and stronger than his 235 pounds. His lateral and reverse movements are efficient, he reads well and cuts through traffic. He plays off blockers, keeps people away from his legs and delivers from a squared, hitting position. He's tempered his recklessness and now plays more under control in the team's well-defined system.

The other inside man, 5-9 Sam Mills, is long on production. He led the team in tackles (95) while collecting three sacks, a couple of defensed passes and a fumble recovery. He provides ironclad run support, is a sure tackler and certainly no bargain for lead blockers. Like most Saints linebackers, Mills has little coverage responsibility; last year, the 'backers collected only one interception and 11 passes defensed.

Depth went the way of Plan B'ers Walter Johnson and Joe Kohlbrand. That leaves third-year pro Brian Forde, a gung-ho special teams player, and once-promising Alvin Toles, who missed the '89 season mending from knee surgery. **GRADE** (max. 10): **8.5**

DEFENSIVE BACKS The Saints played most of the season with cornerbacks (Toi Cook and Robert Massey) who had not previously started an NFL game. With limited range at strong safety (George Atkins) and a nine-year corner playing free safety (Dave Waymer), opponents had a field day. In a division loaded with great arms — Joe Montana, Jim Everett and Chris Miller, three of the NFC's top seven quarterbacks — New Orleans' secondary sieve surrendered a team-record 4,222 yards (26th), a dozen pass plays of 40 yards or more and a 55.5 percent completion rate.

Cook and Massey had a brutal baptism. Cook survived at the right corner more on athletic ability than speed or quickness. He was an outstanding baseball player at Stanford, but you don't get to grab a bat in this game — he must get more physical, not only in bump situations but against the run, if he's going to survive. Not only did he play soft, he also didn't display a big-play/takeaway mentality. Despite a slow start, Cook is alert, plays well in zone situations and did get better. His backpedal and hip turn are a bit rough, but he moves well to the ball. If the Saints uncover another corner or Milton Mack makes a move, Cook could go back to centerfield (free safety). Mack isn't nearly as athletic, and his lack of speed mandates a healthy cushion. He's capable, though, with one sack, two picks, 11 passes defensed and 36 tackles.

Massey had five interceptions and a team-second 72 unassisted stops. The second-round draft pick also made just about every rookie mistake. He relied too much on emotion and instinct and bit on play-fakes like a starving catfish. He gambled too much, then lacked the necessary recovery speed. He was also, at times, outstanding in man coverage. Quick, fluid and tougher than he looks, he closes rapidly on plays in front of him. He wasn't nearly as smooth in reverse with his turn-and-go, and often had trouble picking up the ball.

Despite man-coverage problems, Atkins (76 tackles) seems set at strong safety. His resume features the required tough-hitter qualities, but with his limited speed and range, he must develop better recognition skills. His timing and ball reactions leave a lot to be desired.

Waymer's Plan B loss (San Francisco's gain) moves Brett Maxie into the free safety spot, a position he played in '87 and '88. He is smart, anticipates well, has some cover ability and deals better in zones. He's a competent backup being force-fed into a starting role.

Special teams ace Bennie Thompson also will get a shot at safety. Kim Phillips, the club's third-round pick a year ago, missed 11 games with a hamstring pull and will develop his Massey-like skills in nickel duty.

GRADE (max. 10): **4.5**

SPECIAL TEAMS For the second straight year, the Saints' coverage and return units slipped, and Mora, a special teams fanatic, won't be much happier in 1990. Plan B robbed the Saints of return man Rod Harris (Dallas) and coverage hounds Walter Johnson (Dallas) and Joe Kohlbrand (Jets). Bobby Morse and Gene Atkins lack explosiveness for kick returns, while Morse is hardly scintillating on punts, either (2.9 yards last year).

Morten Andersen roots his kickoffs deep but didn't deliver the long field goals last season. He remains a threat up to 55 yards, but went 0 for 4 beyond 50 yards and just 3 of 6 over 40. Punter Tommy Barnhardt had a 35.0 net, eighth-best in the league. **GRADE** (max. 10): **6.0**

COACHING/ ORGANIZATION Although Jim Mora took plenty of heat last season, he remains one of the league's most organized, detail-oriented coaches. Tough-minded but fair, he believes in the K.I.S.S. (Keep It Simple, Stupid) principle. He loves a pressure defense and expects the offense to not lose the game. His staff is in tune with his straightfoward, make-no-mistakes strategies.

Despite some atrocious draft decisions by this franchise, Jim Finks, president and general manager, remains one of the NFL's top front office people. He should be more effective now that his push for the commissioner's job is over. Owner Tom Benson, for all his visibility, generally keeps his hands off the operation.

If the Saints on the field had the same level of talent and resources as their front office, New Orleans would be 13-3 every season. **GRADE** (max. 10): **7.5**

DRAFT No surprise that five of the top six draft picks were defensive players. Both Turnbull and Smeenge (in the offseason, he tested positive for steroids) are long-armed, hybrid linebacker/end types with the speed and quickness to harass quarterbacks. If Smeenge can bulk up legally, he could be the steal of the draft. Speed (a flu-ridden 4.7) was the knock against Vince Buck, but he's an accomplished, polished corner built like a strong safety. Arbuckle is only a so-so blocker, but has better deep speed than any tight end on the roster.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.0**

1990 DRAFT round number (pick in round; overall sequence): 1. (16,14) RENALDO TURNBULL, DE, West Virginia; 2. (19,44) VINCE BUCK, DB, Central State, Ohio; 3. (18,71) JOEL SMEENGE, DE, Western Michigan; 4. (17,98) DeMOND WINSTON, LB, Vanderbilt; 5. (16,125) CHARLES ARBUCKLE, TE, UCLA; 6. (19,156) MIKE BUCK, QB, Maine; 6. (21,158) JAMES WILLIAMS, LB, Mississippi State; 7. (18,183) SCOTT HOUGH, OG, Maine; 8. (14,207) GERRY GDOWSKI, QB, Nebraska; 8. (17,210) DERRICK CARR, DE, Bowling Green; 9. (13,233) BRODERICK GRAVES, RB, Winston-Salem St.; 9. (16,236) LONNIE BROCKMAN, LB, West Virginia; 10. (12,260) GARY COOPER, WR, Clemson; 10. (19,267) ERNEST SPEARS, DB, Southern California; 11. (11,287) WEBBIE BURNETT, NT, Western Kentucky; 12. (17,320) CHRIS PORT, OG, Duke.

T.Q.© 59.0

VETERANS ROSTER

NO.	NAME	POS.	HT.	WT.	BIRTH-DATE	COLLEGE	NFL EXP.
86	Alphin, G.	WR	6-3	220	5/21/64	Kansas State	1
7	Andersen, M.	K	6-2	221	8/19/60	Michigan State	9
28	Atkins, G.	SS	6-1	200	11/22/64	Florida A&M	4
6	Barnhardt, T.	P	6-2	207	6/11/63	North Carolina	4
85	Brenner, H.	TE	6-5	245	6/2/59	Southern Cal	10
67	Brock, S.	T	6-6	292	6/8/58	Colorado	11
41	Cook, T.	CB	5-11	188	12/3/64	Stanford	4
71	Cooper, R.	T	6-4	285	11/1/64	Tennessee	1
79	Derby, G.	T	6-6	290	6/27/64	Wisconsin	2
72	Dombrowski, J.	T-G	6-5	298	10/19/63	Virginia	5
63	*Edelman, B.	G	6-6	270	9/3/60	Missouri	9
22	Fenerty, G.	RB	6-0	205	8/24/63	Holy Cross	1
52	Forde, B.	LB	6-3	225	11/1/63	Washington State	3
11	Fourcade, J.	QB	6-1	215	10/11/60	Mississippi	4
12	Garrett, J.	QB	6-0	196	3/28/66	Princeton	1
91	Griffin, W.	NT	6-3	280	3/24/66	Nebraska	1
74	Haverdink, K.	T	6-5	285	10/20/65	Western Michigan	2
3	Hebert, B.	QB	6-4	215	8/19/60	Northwestern La.	6
34	Heyward, C.	FB	5-11	260	9/26/66	Pittsburgh	3
61	Hilgenberg, J.	C-G	6-2	252	7/10/62	Iowa	7
87	Hill, L.	WR	5-11	189	9/25/65	Washington	4
21	Hilliard, D.	RB	5-8	204	1/21/64	LSU	5
57	Jackson, R.	LB	6-2	243	3/20/58	Pittsburgh	10
53	Johnson, V.	LB	6-3	235	3/24/62	N.C. State	5
23	Jordan, B.	FB	6-0	223	6/26/62	McNeese State	5
45	King, T.	FS	6-1	190	3/31/66	Southwestern La.	1
60	Korte, S.	C	6-2	271	1/15/60	Arkansas	8
24	Mack, M.	CB	5-11	182	9/20/63	Alcorn State	4
84	Martin, E.	WR	6-1	207	11/8/61	LSU	6
93	Martin, W.	DE	6-5	275	10/26/65	Arkansas	2
40	Massey, R.	CB	5-10	182	2/17/67	N.C. Central	2
39	Maxie, B.	S	6-2	194	1/13/62	Texas Southern	6
36	Mayes, R.	RB	5-11	200	6/6/63	Washington State	4
51	Mills, S.	LB	5-9	225	6/3/59	Montclair State	5
35	Morse, B.	FB	5-10	213	10/3/65	Michigan State	3
38	Nicholson, C.	CB	5-9	183	7/9/67	Oregon State	1
80	Perriman, B.	WR	5-9	180	10/10/65	Miami (Fla.)	3
43	Philips, K.	CB	5-9	188	10/28/66	North Texas	2
55	*Simien, T.	LB	6-1	245	5/21/67	Texas Christian	1
83	Scales, G.	TE	6-4	253	5/9/66	Wake Forest	3
96	Simmons, M.	DE	6-4	269	11/14/65	Mississippi State	1
56	Swilling, P.	LB	6-3	242	10/25/64	Georgia Tech	5
37	Thompson, B.	SS	6-0	200	2/10/63	Grambling State	1
82	Tice, J.	TE	6-5	249	6/22/60	Maryland	8
54	Toles, A.	LB	6-1	234	3/23/63	Tennessee	5
65	Trapilo, S.	G	6-5	281	9/20/64	Boston College	4
88	Turner, F.	WR	5-11	188	5/29/66	Northwestern La.	2
50	Wheeler, T.	C	6-4	269	7/25/67	Georgia	1
94	Wilks, J.	NT	6-5	275	3/12/58	San Diego State	10
18	Wilson, D.	QB	6-3	206	4/27/59	Illinois	9
95	*Woods, T.	DE	6-4	274	3/19/66	Oklahoma	2

*Plan B free agent

ATLANTA FALCONS

1989 RECORD: 3-13 HEAD COACH: JERRY GLANVILLE STADIUM: ATLANTA-FULTON COUNTY (59,643)

In this silver anniversary 25th season, the Atlanta Falcons have changed the predominant color in their game jerseys and helmets from red to black. Perfect. Black is, after all, the ultimate destiny of tarnished silver.

And, who did the Falcons make their fourth new coach in five seasons, given the franchise's funereal history and tragic 1989 season? The Man in Black, naturally, a man with a Johnny Cash wardrobe, a man Houston called the Count —former Oilers coach Jerry Glanville. Just how much darker can things get? Read on.

In 24 seasons, Atlanta has managed only five winning records (the last in 1982), one NFC West division championship (1980), one postseason victory (1978), an overall .373 winning percentage (129-218-5), last place in its division for the past three years (six of the last seven), and third-poorest NFL record in the 1980s behind Tampa Bay and Indianapolis.

In 1989, things didn't get any brighter. Last year's Falcons were the first Atlanta team to lose 13 games, two players (rookie tackle Ralph Norwood, second-year tight end Brad Beckman) were killed in auto accidents and the season ended with seven straight losses, an 0-8 road record and an 0-6 division mark, with the Falcons averaging 15.5 points per loss. Atlanta ranked last in rushing offense, rushing defense and total defense, last in points allowed (437), and last in rushing touchdowns allowed (26). Oh, yeah, five paternity suits were filed against players and front office personnel.

Glanville, an assistant for Atlanta's three playoff teams, including the lone division winner, has not allowed the team to dwell on its shortcomings. After all, he does inherit a roster with 13 No. 1 draft choices. But the league showed no mercy by issuing the Falcons the NFL's most difficult schedule. With another last-place finish almost assured, celebrating a silver anniversary seems like black humor, indeed.

WIDE RECEIVERS/ TIGHT END

Glanville's "Red Gun" offense — a run-and-shoot spinoff featuring four wideouts 70 percent of the time — should bolster the careers and statistics of young receivers Shawn Collins, Michael Haynes and newly acquired Colt Andre Rison. They average 23.3 years in age and have only four seasons of NFL experience, but last season that added up to 163 receptions, 2,595 yards and 15 touchdowns.

In the Red Gun, the larger wide receivers line up on the outside, with the quicker, more flexible targets in the slot. That likely means Collins (6-2, 207) and Haynes (6-0, 180), former college teammates at Northern Arizona, will work the boundaries. When playing together for 11 games last year, they averaged 7.9 receptions per outing; during Haynes' five-game injury absence, Atlanta wideouts averaged only 6.0 receptions.

Haynes is a frail-looking, flat-out speedster who adjusts well to the ball and can streak by unsuspecting corners (1 touchdown per 6.6 catches). Although he doesn't chop his steps well and is sloppy pulling out of his streak on the deep hook, his home run threat is the key to stretching defenses, and this team's success.

Collins' best move — an inside possession pattern — may suffer in the Red Gun. With his superior size, strength and sneaky deep speed, Collins shields defenders well and catches the ball away from his body. A fearless receiver who can overwhelm smaller defensive backs, he is also an above-average downfield blocker.

Rison, whose big-play potential was stunted by the Colts' run-oriented attack, should profit from this high-tech passing system. Not fast enough to separate from corners, he will be aligned either in the slot or in motion and key the safety as a "seam reader." From there he can concentrate on underneath and crossing routes and use his quickness, burst out of cuts and tailback elusiveness to make plays in spread-field situations.

The other starting slot will come from a group including holdover veterans Floyd Dixon, Stacey Bailey and George Thomas or free agent Titus Dixon, who had an impressive spring. Thomas and Titus Dixon have superior speed but are far from polished receivers. Bailey, an eight-year vet, has sagged noticeably. In the Red Gun, the tight end becomes virtually a third offensive tackle who rarely plays beyond first down. Gary Wilkins is a solid blocker but inconsistent receiver, whose eight catches resulted in a you-forgot-about-me 22.4 average gain.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.0**

OFFENSIVE LINE

Not all the blame for the team's 24th-ranked total offense, dead-last rushing offense, and fourth-most sacks allowed (51) can be heaped upon the offensive line. Alienated by the front office hard-line negotiations, Bill Fralic signed four days before the opener, Wayne Radloff (now in San Francisco via Plan B) returned a week into the campaign and John Scully sat out the season and wasn't re-signed until last May. The death of No. 2 draft choice Ralph Norwood compounded the mix-and-match mishmash. Despite three players (Fralic, Chris Hinton, Mike Kenn), who represent a collective 16 Pro Bowls, the Falcons will field a group sporting more reputation than recent results.

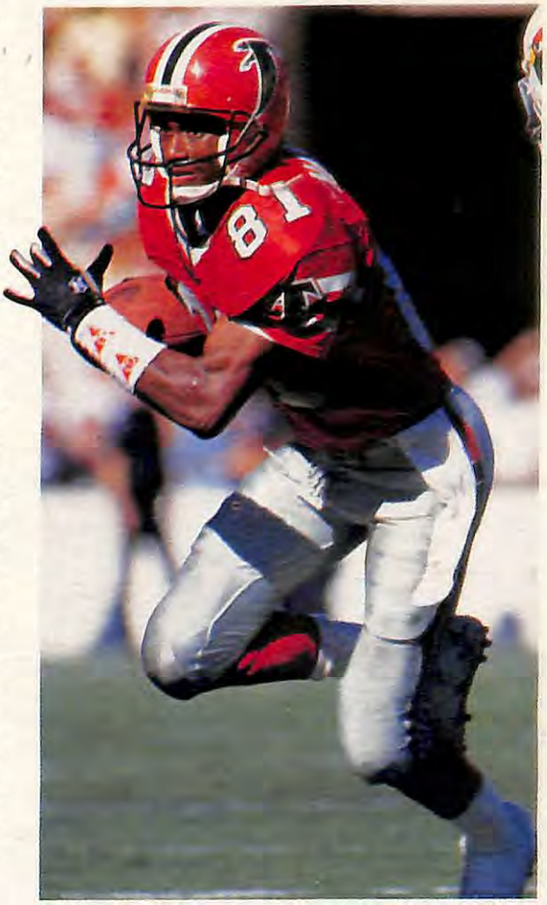
The offseason arrival of Hinton, a six-time Pro Bowler from Indianapolis, plus Plan B signings of Ronnie Lee (Miami), Ben Utt (Indianapolis) and Mike Ruether (Denver) highlight the team's new priorities. Hinton (6-4, 300) improves the tackle situation, though it's uncertain which side he'll play. Despite a questionable work ethic, Hinton is a quick-footed, talented athlete with good knee bend. He is nimble and flexible enough to play the finesse game and strong enough for Glanville's aggressive fire-out pass blocks. He struggles against quick upfield rushers and, for that reason, may wind up at right tackle where the Falcons can better utilize his fine one-on-one drive blocking.

Thanks to vigorous offseason conditioning, Kenn retained the left tackle position over the spring. But he is 34 and fading fast. His long, lean look (6-7, 277) does not fit into the present Falcons mold, which calls for short, squatty, wide-body players who explode into a run block and fire out with authority. Gone are Kenn's quintessential pass techniques and quickness. He allowed an agonizing 10 sacks in his 15 starts last year, as his blend of position, leverage and cushion in the pocket eroded. He is no match for NFC West speed rushers.

Center Jamie Dukes and right tackle Houston Hoover were the most consistent Falcons last year, and both fit the physical criteria. A former guard, Dukes (6-1, 285) had transition problems moving to center but made steady progress. He's a quick, gritty scramble blocker with excellent body control, and is rarely overpowered in one-on-one nose-tackle matchups. Overachieving and often overweight, he'll need to master the shotgun snap, a Red Gun staple. Ruether has good strength but lacks agility.

Hoover (6-2, 290) started all 16 games despite aching knees and a bad shoulder. He is raw and warrior-like, yet void of pass-protection technique. His set on pass drops is shaky, his arm extension and cushion subpar. He can uproot defenders at the point of attack and may move to left guard, where his pass blocking would be less exposed. That finally could shut what was a revolving door (Radloff, Stan Clayton, Tommy Robison) last season.

Right guard Fralic played himself into shape in '89, and suffered. Lighter (275-280) than in past years, he now depends more on leverage and technique than brute force. Without that great upper-body strength, his days of routinely pancaking defenders are over. Never quick, he uses his hands and arms better these days, still can pull and lead, and likes to strong-arm pass rushers.



Michael Haynes

Left guard Stan Clayton is the athlete of the group. He has superb body control, adjusts well to movement and is smooth dropping into protection. Entering his third season, he's steadily gotten better. It remains to be seen how a year's absence affects Scully, a solid technician lacking punch. Lee (right tackle) and Utt (guard), who started 31 of 32 games for their teams, play hurt and hustle. Lee is still a quick-footed pass blocker, but doesn't fire out on the run. Utt relied more on sweat than skill, but knee injuries have worn him down. Keep an eye on tackle John Hunter, a second-year pro with a big frame (6-8, 296) and growing feel for the passing game. **GRADE** (max. 10): **6.5**

QUARTERBACK

Assuming Chris Miller will spend the necessary time learning the complicated reads and audibles inherent in the Red Gun, he and the Falcons offense should be in for better days. In Glanville's new passing system, seven-step drops are replaced by half-rolls and three- and five-step retreats. Setting up behind the tackle should keep Miller from suffering another beating (41 sacks), and help display his ability to throw on the run.

Miller's arm is more rifle than cannon. Intelligence, judgment and aim resulted in his league-low interception percentage, despite a late-season slump and being forced to throw on 61 percent of the team's snaps. Eight of his 10 interceptions came in the final six weeks, and he had just two multiple-interception games in 15 starts. In one stretch, he threw 185 times without being picked off. His 3,459 yards was the third-highest total in club history, his completions (280) and attempts (526) second-highest, and he

tied a team record with 10 straight completions. While Miller can throw every pass, he is best in the mid- and short-range. Despite criticism that Miller studied more golf courses than game plans, he's a tough, mobile pocket passer with leadership ability. With solid coaching, he should develop; with a supporting cast, he'll win games.

Hugh Millen has a big league arm but it may stay a secret playing behind Miller. Former CFL player Gilbert Renfroe, a run-and-shoot veteran with another powerful, scattershot arm, will challenge for the No. 2 spot.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.0**

RUNNING BACKS Without a star box-office attraction, the Falcons have a bunch of supporting actors. It's a poor script and one that didn't play well in 1989. The Falcons finished with just 1,155 yards, the league's worst single-season total of the '80s. It's been 25 games since an Atlanta runner has rushed for 100 yards. Atlanta had the fewest rushing attempts in 1989 and was next to last in time of possession. In six division contests, the running game managed just 328 yards, a meager 55 yards per game.

John Settle, Keith Jones and Gene Lang are well-rounded (run, block, catch), but lack outside speed and any breakaway dimension. Settle is the best of the group, a hard-driving, blue-collar inside runner with little burst, limited acceleration and only average instincts. A step-and-a-half slow and seemingly drawn to defenders even when he manages to break into the secondary, Settle probably will never duplicate his 1,000-yard season of 1988. As a featured runner, he has trouble picking the right hole, doesn't cut well and lacks agility. He's better as a complementary back. A bit of a plodder with decent balance, he has fine receiving skills on the swings (39 catches).

Jones is strong, tough, blocks and catches well, but also is stuck in third gear. While he can move the pile in short-yardage and goal-line situations, he lacks the size/speed package to be a top-flight fullback. Journeyman Lang has decent in-line quickness and is a better receiver than Jones — 39 catches, 11.2 average as the club's third-down specialist — but lacks inside punch.

Greg Paterra (5-11, 211) is a mini-Hulk Hogan look-alike. He simply takes the ball and goes, but his blocking and receiving skills are rough. A learning disability hinders his assimilation of the offense.

GRADE (max. 10): **3.5**

DEFENSIVE LINE In two of the past three seasons (1987, '89), the Falcons finished dead last in rushing defense (25th in '88), despite having three first-round picks and a second-rounder in the trenches. There is a critical need for a dominating defensive end. Last year, they tried every front in the playbook and opponents still had 64 runs of 10-plus yards.

Don't blame nose tackle Tony Casillas, whose Pro Bowl effort went unrecognized. He was second in team tackles (152), astounding for that position. Playing in both a two-gap and right-gap scheme, he dominated blockers with unquestioned dedication. Although he doesn't get much pass-rush penetration, and often is replaced in nickel situations, he is a big, fast, strong, emotional run stopper who's improved his hand fighting. Although he has limited lateral agility, he diagnoses well, cuts through the trash and follows his flawless radar to the ball.

Tim Green bounced from outside to inside linebacker to defensive end and had his best season (111 tackles, 5 sacks). Miscast as an outside 'backer, he has a quick, penetrating start and a fair close on the quarterback, though he has yet to show a complete pass-rush package. Coaches already have instructed Green (6-2, 245) to add 10 pounds, and that he'll be strictly a down lineman.

Regular starting ends Mike Gann and Rick Bryan had miserable seasons. Bryan lasted two games before going on injured reserve with a nerve root ailment that cost him feeling and strength in his right arm and shoulder. A marginal player at the point in a 3-4, the team sorely missed his enthusiasm and hustle. Normally effective against the run, Gann was hooked more times than a fat bass in a shallow pond. He lacks the speed to threaten quarterbacks and didn't get the first of his two sacks until the 15th game. Ben Thomas, who replaced Bryan most of the time, had 103 tackles but is a journeyman. Former Dolphin Jackie Cline is stiff but produced (4 sacks in '88) when he was given playing time.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.5**

LINEBACKERS When Aundray Bruce and Marcus Cotton were selected in the first two rounds of the 1988 draft, they were expected to be the team's defensive cornerstones for years. Last year, they resembled millstones.

Left outside linebacker Bruce, a man-child, has wondrous athleticism but lacks instincts and an understanding of his role. His tremendous raw blitz, tackling and chasing abilities appear in brief flashes. A fluid college performer, Bruce has become a confused underachiever. Perhaps the previous regime's read-and-react schemes took the "act" out of his "react." Bruce (6-5, 248) repeatedly ran himself out of plays. His lack of production — just 36 solos among 66 tackles (6 sacks) seemed to lead to less effort and motivation. With Glanville's simplified plan — don't think, just hit — he could blossom. This defense needs him to become a star.

Cotton, who rarely had back-to-back training camp practice days because of knee surgery, may never be healthy enough to rise above situational duty. Despite being built more like a running back than a linebacker, he has the size (6-3, 237), speed and explosive quickness to be a weakside force. Like his close friend Bruce, Cotton is sometimes unmotivated and concentrates on only one phase of the game, rushing the quarterback (team-high 9 sacks). He, like Bruce, disdains the run, refusing to sort through the swill, and too easily is blasted out of the hole.

On the inside, Jessie Tuggle had a team-high 183 tackles while veteran John Rade had the fifth 100-tackle season (102) of his seven-year career. While Tuggle is undersized (5-11, 230) and can be overwhelmed, he flies around and will hit with anybody. He can't cover, but under Glanville he won't have to worry about reverse. Rade is another overachieving hustler.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.0**

DEFENSIVE BACKS At times, the play of rookie Deion Sanders was brighter than a Las Vegas casino; other times, it was as lively as the desert. Relying more on raw speed and athleticism than technique, he has prototype cornerback coverage tools —incredible 4.29 speed, great quickness, a closing burst, fluid backpedal, great hip turn and instincts. He lacks toughness in run support, but instead of playing 7 yards off the line, he'll be freed up to challenge receivers and has the ability to virtually take some out of the game plan. He has outstanding anticipation and, as a centerfielder in nickel coverage, picked off three passes (5 interceptions total). "Prime Time" is a seemingly irrepressible talent destined to be a Pro Bowl regular.

Third-year pro Charles Dimry, just a shade behind Sanders in coverage ability, should challenge veteran Bobby Butler at the left corner spot. Frail (6-0, 175) but fleet, he misjudges too many throws and doesn't drive on the ball as much as you'd like. But he recovers well, plays his man tough and can turn and go. Butler, a crafty nine-year pro, adds cornerback insurance and nickel help. He's better in zone these days, yet misses more tackles than he used to.

Scott Case, hampered by a foot problem last year, no longer will be able to hide his lack of speed and man-coverage skills in the Falcons' hang-back schemes. In camp, he'll (reluctantly) move from corner to free safety, a position he played early in his career. Despite a reputation as a gritty player, Case is a poor tackler. His skinny (6-0, 178) body will be put to the test under the more aggressive secondary strategies.

Brian Jordan and Elbert Shelley will battle at strong safety. Shelley is an impending train wreck on special teams, but stalls in coverage. Jordan is stockier and a better athlete, but lacks feel and experience. Tim Gordon, a former starter slowed by injuries in '89, can swing between either safety position.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.5**

SPECIAL TEAMS Although Sanders' kickoff (20.7) and punt returns (11.0, 1 TD) were shaky over the season's second half, he is a constant home run threat. A little less shuffling and more following of his blockers would help. Paul McFadden's leg didn't help kickoff return coverage (16th). On the other hand, Scott Fulhage (41.3, 33.3 net) was one of the league's better directional punters (24 inside the 20), despite the club's fifth-worst punt coverage.

McFadden, who tore a thigh muscle late in the season, and Greg Davis will battle for the placement job. McFadden is more accurate (15 for 20) while Davis has more boom.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.5**

COACHING/ ORGANIZATION Jerry Glanville's antics irritated his colleagues, and his Houston teams were among the NFL's most undisciplined. On the sidelines, he tried calling both offensive and defensive plays, which was probably unwise and certainly unheard of today. His strength is on the defensive side of the ball, but judging from his inexperienced offensive staff (9 NFL years among 5 aides), Glanville may once again call all the shots.

The key football man in the organization is vice president of player personnel Ken Herock, a tireless worker and keen judge of talent. He's primarily been responsible for upgrading the Atlanta roster after arriving three years ago. He also orchestrated the blockbuster draft-day trade that essentially netted the Falcons two starters (Chris Hinton, Andre Rison) and a 1991 top pick for the rights to Illinois quarterback Jeff George. Score that round to Herock.

GRADE (max. 10): **5.5**

DRAFT After trading away the draft's top pick, the Falcons uncovered what may be a nugget in Broussard, a mighty-mite tailback (5-7, 205) with explosive 4.45 speed. With a low center of gravity and herky-jerky quickness, he's tough to bring down. He's also a fine receiver with soft hands. He could become an immediate starter in one-back sets. Conner is a super talent who needs lots of polish. He can play inside or outside and should help the pass rush. Barnett was inconsistent but has good physical tools. Jordan, a good late-round bet, can run and hit and actually was rated the draft's fourth-best linebacker by some scouts.

GRADE (max. 10): **6.0**

1990 DRAFT round number (pick in round; overall sequence): 1. (22,20) STEVE BROUSSARD, RB, Washington State; 2. (2,27) DARION CONNER, LB, Jackson State; 3. (2,55) OLIVER BARNETT, DE, Kentucky; 5. (12,121) REGGIE REDDING, TE, Cal State Fullerton; 6. (2,139) MIKE PRINGLE, RB, Cal State Fullerton; 8. (2,195) TORY EPPS, NT, Memphis State; 9. (2,222) DARRELL JORDAN, LB, Northern Arizona; 10. (2,250) DONNIE SALUM, LB, Arizona; 11. (2,278) CHRIS ELLISON, DB, Houston; 12. (2,305) SHAWN McCARTHY, P, Purdue.

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VETERANS ROSTER

NO.	NAME	POS.	HT.	WT.	BIRTH-DATE	COLLEGE	NFL EXP.
82	Bailey, S.	WR	6-1	163	2/10/60	San Jose State	9
65	Bingham, G.	C-G	6-3	260	2/25/58	Montana	11
93	Bruce, A.	LB	6-5	248	4/30/66	Auburn	3
77	Bryan, R.	DE	6-4	265	3/20/62	Oklahoma	7
23	Butler, B.	CB	5-11	175	5/28/59	Florida State	10
25	Case, S.	CB	6-0	178	5/17/62	Oklahoma	7
75	Casillas, T.	NT	6-3	280	10/26/63	Oklahoma	5
74	Clayton, S.	G	6-3	265	1/31/65	Penn State	3
98	*Cline, J.	DE-NT	6-5	280	3/13/60	Alabama	4
85	Collins, S.	WR	6-2	207	2/20/67	Northern Arizona	2
51	Cotton, M.	LB	6-3	237	8/11/66	Southern Cal	3
5	Davis, G.	K	5-11	197	11/29/65	The Citadel	4
22	Dimry, C.	CB	6-0	175	1/31/66	Nevada-Las Vegas	3
86	Dixon, F.	WR	5-9	170	4/9/64	Stephen F. Austin	5
90	Dixon, T.	WR	5-6	152	6/15/66	Troy State	1
64	Dukes, J.	G	6-1	285	6/14/64	Florida State	5
79	Fralic, B.	G	6-5	280	10/31/62	Pittsburgh	6
17	Fulhage, S.	P	5-10	193	11/17/61	Kansas State	4
76	Gann, M.	DE	6-5	270	10/19/63	Notre Dame	6
41	Gordon, T.	S	6-0	188	5/7/65	Tulsa	4
99	Green, T.	LB	6-2	245	12/16/63	Syracuse	5
81	Haynes, M.	WR	6-0	180	12/24/65	Northern Arizona	3
91	Hinnant, M.	TE	6-3	258	9/8/66	Temple	3
71	Hinton, C.	T	6-4	300	7/31/61	Northwestern	8
69	Hoover, H.	T-G	6-2	290	6/2/65	Jackson State	3
68	Hunter, J.	T	6-8	296	8/16/65	Brigham Young	2
43	*Johnson, T.	RB	6-0	280	3/13/60	Alabama	4
38	Jones, K.	RB	6-1	210	3/20/66	Illinois	2
40	Jordan, B.	S	5-11	202	3/29/67	Richmond	2
78	Kenn, M.	T	6-7	277	2/9/56	Michigan	13
33	Lang, G.	RB	5-10	206	3/15/62	LSU	7
63	*Lee, R.	T	6-3	277	12/24/56	Baylor	12
6	McFadden, P.	K	5-11	166	9/24/61	Youngstown State	7
7	Millen, H.	QB	6-5	216	11/22/63	Washington	3
12	Miller, C.	QB	6-2	200	8/9/65	Oregon	4
36	Paterra, G.	RB	5-11	211	5/11/67	Slippery Rock	2
59	Rade, J.	LB	6-1	240	8/31/60	Boise State	8
95	Reid, M.	LB	6-2	235	6/25/64	Wisconsin	4
14	Renfroe, G.	QB	6-1	195	2/18/63	Tennessee State	1
80	Rison, A.	WR	6-0	191	3/18/67	Michigan State	2
56	*Ruether, M.	C	6-4	275	9/20/62	Texas	5
21	Sanders, D.	CB	6-0	187	8/9/67	Florida State	2
	Scully, J.	G	6-6	270	8/2/58	Notre Dame	9
44	Settle, J.	RB	5-9	210	6/2/65	Appalachian St.	4
37	Shelley, E.	S	5-11	180	12/24/64	Arkansas State	4
72	Thomas, B.	DE	6-3	275	7/2/61	Auburn	5
89	Thomas, G.	WR	5-9	169	7/11/64	Nevada-Las Vegas	2
58	Tuggle, J.	LB	5-11	230	2/14/65	Valdosta State	4
66	*Utt, B.	G	6-6	293	6/13/59	Georgia Tech	9
87	Wilkins, G.	TE	6-2	235	11/23/63	Georgia Tech	3

*Plan B free agent

PRO SPECTUS

By Jay Freeman

A Sneak Peek at the Top 20 Prospects in the 1991 Draft.

Last year, a trickle of underclassmen came out early for the 1989 NFL draft; this year, that trickle developed into a flood as the league's "legal" restriction crumbled. By the late-March declaring date, 38 juniors had become draft-eligible, thus diluting the talent pool for 1991. What looked like a strong senior crop now appears somewhat threadbare. Of course, another strong influx of junior (or even sophomore!) talent would improve things all over again. With that thought in mind, our ProSpectus for 1991 includes, for the first time, a smattering of underclassmen who could opt to declare early for the pros.

1. KANAVIS McGHEE, LB, 6-5, 242, Colorado—McGhee is big enough to play down lineman and agile enough to drop off into coverage. Facing his long arms and exceptional balance, blockers often find it futile to attempt to hook him inside. He's a fine power rusher with the speed to string out wide plays, and he's a punishing tackler who gets surprisingly low for a tall man.

2. ALFRED WILLIAMS, LB, 6-6, 234, Colorado—Together with McGhee, Williams helped form the best linebacking duo in the country last season. While not quite as strong or physical as his teammate, Williams is even faster and quicker. He's a great speed rusher off the corner and can run with many backs on pass coverage. He uses his great arm leverage effectively to control blockers, but he still needs to learn how to protect his long legs from cut blocking. Although Williams doesn't strike with quite the same impact as McGhee, he's usually a reliable wrapup tackler.

3. DARREN LEWIS, HB, 5-11, 210, Texas A&M—Lewis hasn't yet had the monster season that would draw national attention, but pro scouts are well aware of the potential of this talented, productive back. He is a powerful, low-slung runner with an explosive start and very quick feet. He excels making quick adjustments at the line of scrimmage, is fast enough to beat LBs to the corner, and is an effective cutback runner. Lewis' hands are at least adequate and he will block when asked.

4. TODD LYGHT, CB, 6-0, 188, Notre Dame—Lyght was the best player in the best secondary in college football last year. He's a pure CB with above-average speed, a very smooth turning motion, and a good burst coming out of the turn. A solid tackler who plays under control, he rarely makes mental errors. Assuming he stays in school, Lyght seems a cinch to be the first DB drafted.

5. JOHN FLANNERY, C, 6-3, 290, Syracuse—Flannery was probably the most dominant offensive lineman in college football last season and has a chance to become a great pro. He's already a magnificent in-line run blocker who destroys most college-level nose tackles in one-on-one situations. He can fire out to cut off the pursuit of inside LBs, and he's fast enough to get downfield on screens. While he isn't a polished pass blocker, he shows above-average foot movement and has enough arm leverage to prevent pro linemen from yanking him around.

6. CRAIG ERICKSON, QB, 6-2, 200, Miami (Fla.)—After spending two seasons caddying for Steve Walsh, the much-heralded Erickson was handed the starting job last season. While inexperience and injuries took their toll, Erickson still performed competently, if unspectacularly, and this could be the season he explodes. He's a very smooth passer with a compact delivery, strong wrist, and the ability to drill the ball or to lay it up soft. He's mobile enough to get out of trouble and occasionally gains positive yardage on scrambles. Given his limited playing time, he reads coverages fairly well. However, he tends to stay with his primary man too long and sometimes seems unaware of his secondary and safety-valve receivers.

7. HUEY RICHARDSON, LB, 6-5, 232, Florida—Richardson, who once seemed destined for an early pro debut, decided to stay in school. He is a fine athlete and already an excellent pass rusher. With his speed and huge wingspan, he's difficult to wheel outside. While he can string out the wide stuff, Richardson has to improve his strength and ability to cope with pressure at the point of attack before he can make an impact in the pros.

8. TONY BOLES, RB/WR, 6-1, 194, Michigan—For much of 1989, Boles and Leroy Hoard gave the Wolverines a great backfield combination. Now Hoard heads for the pros a year early, while Boles is coming off reconstructive knee surgery. Before his injury, Boles was a gamebreaking runner with good speed, great acceleration, and the ability to consistently beat the first tackler. He was a surprisingly tough inside runner, despite a somewhat slim frame. If Boles makes it all the way back, he's a cinch first-rounder.

9. RUSSELL MARYLAND, DT, 6-2, 272, Miami (Fla.)—Last season, Maryland was probably the most consistent performer on a magnificent defensive line. While his short stature and ordinary speed are negatives, his intensity, aggressiveness and savvy make him a standout. He uses his hands superbly against both the run and pass, and has a great knack for staying low and holding his ground against the drive block.

10. RAGHIB ISMAIL, WR, 5-10, 175, Notre Dame—Ismail, who will be a true junior in 1990, may come out early for the 1991 draft if he has a strong season. He is already a great return man and shows signs of maturing into a great receiver. He has world-class speed and knows how to control that speed effectively on pass routes. While Ismail still catches too many passes with his body, his hands are improving and he isn't afraid to extend in traffic.

11. MOE GARDNER, DT/NT, 6-3, 260, Illinois—Like Miami's Russell Maryland, Gardner's performance outshines his modest "numbers." He's a superb penetrator against the run or pass, and his motor runs nonstop. Despite a relatively small frame, he plays the run effectively. While Gardner claims he's most comfortable and effective playing inside, he's probably quick enough to move to DE.

12. BRETT FAVRE, QB, 6-2, 210, Southern Mississippi—Favre has a strong, quick arm and good mobility. While he has been a productive passer and fine leader for the past two seasons, he still has rough spots. He has yet to master the knack of throwing on the break, he tends to throw off his back foot when pressured, and he must learn to put more air under his deep throws. Still, Favre is one of those well-kept secrets who often "come out of nowhere" when April rolls around.

13. SHANE COLLINS, DT/DE, 6-4, 273, Arizona State—Collins came from a weak high school football program, spending more time on track than football. Yet he won a starting job as a redshirt freshman and continued to progress as a sophomore in 1989. He's a gifted athlete with size, natural strength and an explosive charge. While he's still a very raw player, he could well mature into a dominant force in 1990. If that happens, Collins will have to seriously consider coming out early.

14. DAVID ROCKER, DT, 6-3, 270, Auburn—For several years, Auburn coaches have insisted David will surpass the achievements of his older brother Tracy, the Redskins' first pick last year. This could be the year David proves them correct. Rocker is already a good (but not as good as he could be) run stopper with excellent strength and pursuit talents. Like most Auburn linemen, he's a crude and often ineffective pass rusher who tries to bull over blockers. Yet, he has the initial quickness and lateral agility to become a good rusher as a 4-3 DT or 3-4 DE.

15. SHAWN MOORE, QB, 6-2, 212, Virginia—Moore is a great athlete and productive player who hasn't yet convinced scouts he can play QB in the pros. He has a powerful arm and a buggywhip release. Still, he is a crude, erratic passer who lacks touch and apparently has trouble seeing the field clearly when he throws from the pocket. He's fast enough to play WR and strong enough to play RB, so his pro potential is still exciting.

16. TIM BRUTON, TE, 6-4, 237, Missouri—Assuming he returns for his senior season, Bruton has a good chance to be the first TE drafted. He has soft, reliable hands, adequate speed, and a smooth line release. His routes aren't bad and he can run effectively after the catch. At this point, Bruton is a pusher and shover rather than a blaster at blocking. While he generally does a competent job of sealing off, he doesn't get much movement into his drive blocks.

17. DEREK BROWN, TE, 6-6, 242, Notre Dame—Like virtually all juniors examined here, Brown is rated as much on the basis of potential as on production. Physically, Brown is a prototype tight end, with huge, soft hands, fine speed and exceptional agility. With a more pass-oriented team, his receiving skills could have developed faster, but he has played brilliantly in spurts. Despite a high center of gravity, Brown is already a competent in-line blocker who will continue to improve as he sharpens his techniques.

18. TRIPP WELBORNE, S, 6-1, 196, Michigan—Welborne is a pure safety with fine potential on both the strong and weak sides. He's a hard, accurate tackler with above-average range, good ball reactions and the smarts to handle a variety of coverages. While he isn't particularly fluid, he moves well enough to handle man-to-man coverage adequately at the pro level.

19. ED KING, OG/OT, 6-4, 282, Auburn—King, a starter as a freshman and a standout as a sophomore, could come out early if he continues his progress as a junior. He's already a superb run blocker with great strength, a quick charge, plus an aggressive, tenacious disposition. He's a crude, inexperienced pass blocker who often is beaten badly by speed rushers, yet his foot movement and body control are fine. His pass-blocking talent should eventually blossom.

20. MIKE STONEBREAKER, LB, 6-1, 230, Notre Dame—Stonebreaker, a fine-looking prospect two years ago, must prove he's fully recovered from severe injuries suffered in a car accident that also cost him all of the 1989 season. When healthy, he was a good athlete and outstanding producer. He's a hard-nosed, aggressive player who hits with authority and reads quickly. He has good speed but was so aggressive that he often was badly suckered by play-action fakes.

OTHERS WITH A SHOT AT BREAKING THE BANK: Turnell Sims, G/OT, 6-3, 285, Syracuse; Greg Skrepenak, OT, 6-7, 308, Michigan; Jeff Ellis, TE, 6-3, 240, Ohio State; Curvin Richards, HB, 5-10, 192, Pittsburgh (Jr.); Chris Zorich, NT, 6-1, 268, Notre Dame; Mark Vander Poel, OT, 6-7, 295, Colorado; James Joseph, HB/FB, 6-1, 210, Auburn; George Williams, DT, 6-3, 275, Notre Dame; Harvey Williams, RB, 6-2, 212, LSU; Jarrod Bunch, FB, 6-2, 240, Michigan; Ricky Watters, HB/WR, 6-1, 202, Notre Dame; Ricardo McDonald, LB, 6-2, 230, Pittsburgh (Jr.); Keith Hamilton, DE, 6-5, 254, Pittsburgh (Soph.); Alvin Harper, WR, 6-3, 200, Tennessee; Herman Moore, WR, 6-5, 200, Virginia (Jr.); Scott Davis, QB, 6-2, 190, North Texas; Reggie Cooper, S, 6-2, 200, Nebraska; Robert Brooks, WR, 6-1, 182, South Carolina (Jr.).

Jumping Juniors

Here are the 38 juniors who made themselves eligible for the 1990 NFL Draft. The 18 who were actually selected by NFL teams are indicated in bold:

Terry Allen, RB, Clemson; Braxston Banks, RB, Notre Dame; Sean Barowski, RB, Syracuse; Dirk Borgognone, K, Pacific; Eugene Burkhalter, DB, Washington; Anthony Burnett, DB, UCLA; **Mark Carrier**, DB, Southern California; Danny Cash, T, Alabama; **Reggie Cobb**, RB, Tennessee; **Ron Cox**, LB, Fresno State; Michael Culberhouse, K, Lamar; **Barry Foster**, RB, Arkansas; Brad Gaines, RB, Vanderbilt; Thurman Geathers, RB, Oregon Tech; **Jeff George**, QB, Illinois; Octavius Gould, RB, Minnesota; **Rodney Hampton**, RB, Georgia; **Major Harris**, QB, West Virginia; Robert Haynes, RB, Greenville, Ill.; **Leroy Hoard**, RB, Michigan; Jeff Klemp, K, Kansas; **Keith McCants**, LB, Alabama; Chris Mongeau, G-T, American International; John Mefford, DT, Carson-Newman; **Scott Mitchell**, QB, Utah; Leonard Morris, RB, Cal State-Hayward; **Lamar Lathon**, LB, Houston; Chuck Petitpas, K-P, McGill; **Cornelius Price**, DB, Houston; **Junior Seau**, LB, Southern California; ***Emmitt Smith***, RB, Florida; **Marc Spindler**, DT, Pittsburgh; Bryan Tracy, RB, no college; *John Tregellas*, DE, Sacramento City JC; **Andre Ware**, QB, Houston; Charles Wilson, WR, Memphis State; **Marcus Wilson**, RB, Virginia; Tommy Woodward, DB, Murray State.

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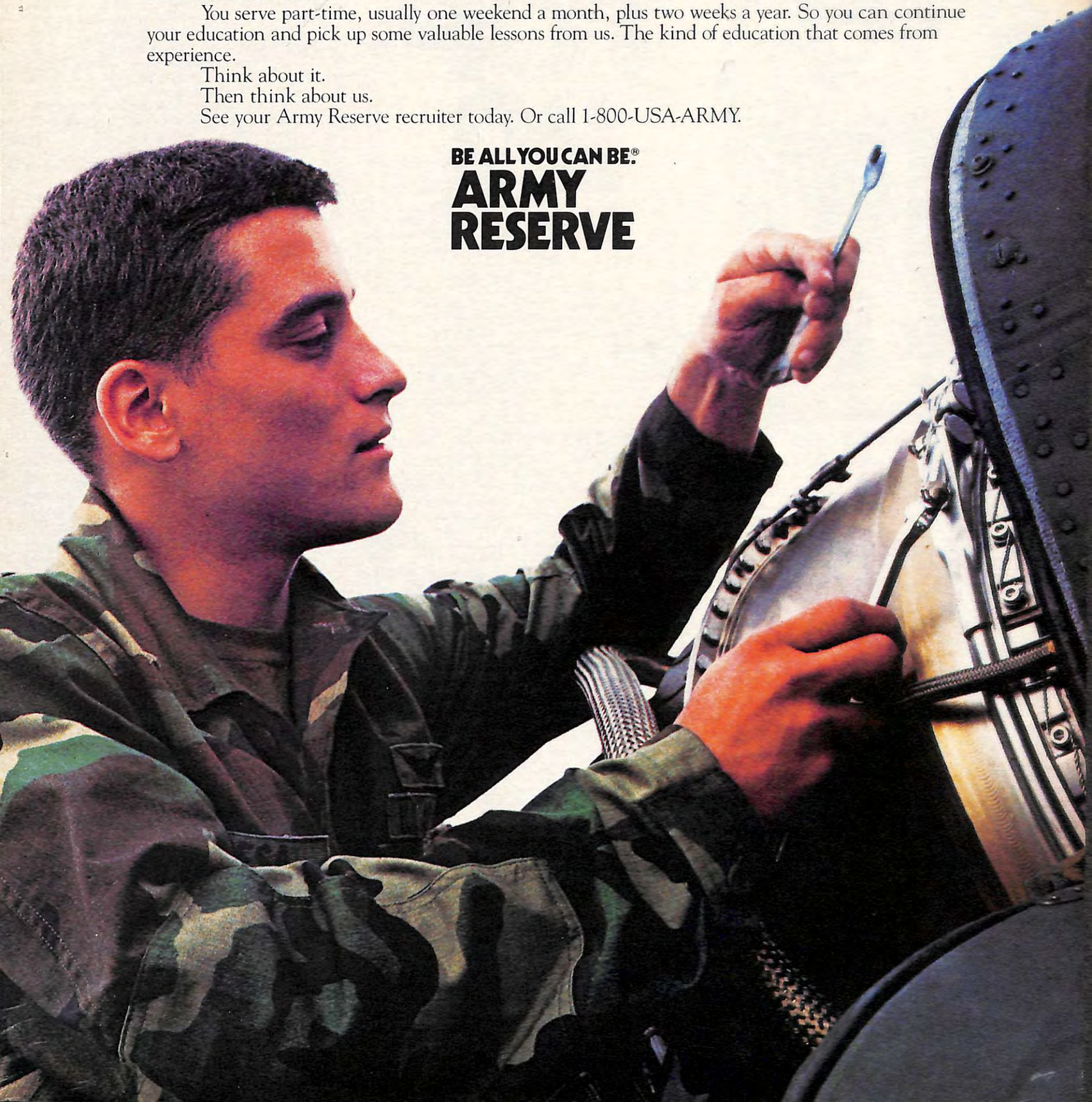
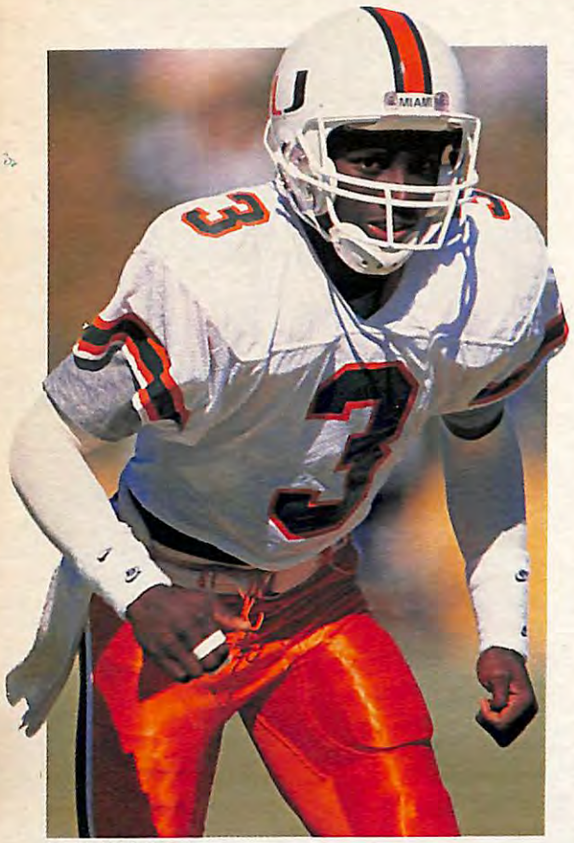


ARMY RESERVE PRESENTS:

COLLEGE TOP 20



Randal Hill, Miami

The 1989 college football national championship essentially boiled down to one game — Miami's 27-10 defeat of Notre Dame. Had the Irish won, they would have finished 13-0, a record worthy of a second consecutive national title. Instead, Miami (11-1, losing only to Florida State) finished atop the polls after the Hurricanes defeated Alabama in the USF&G Sugar Bowl.

Notre Dame coach Lou Holtz wasn't pleased with the pollsters. "You can justify Miami winning it. What you can't justify is why we didn't," said Holtz, whose team defeated then No. 1-ranked Colorado, 21-6, in the Federal Express Orange Bowl. "We had the best record against the toughest schedule in the country. We played at a higher level of emotion for more games than anyone, and were ranked No. 1 longer than anyone.

"You play nine bowl teams, eight of them probably ranked in the Top 20, but is it (the No. 1 ranking) going to be based on one game? It should be who accomplished the most in '89."

Fortunately for Holtz — and for college football fans everywhere — the debate as to the best team in the land continues into the 1990 season, with Notre Dame, Miami, Colorado and Florida State again the top contenders for national honors. Notre Dame appears to have a slight edge, thanks to a softer schedule that includes Miami's visit to South Bend for the final game of the celebrated "Catholics vs. Convicts" series.

The preseason favorites in each Division I-A conference: Clemson (ACC), Colorado (Big Eight), Michigan (Big Ten), Fresno State (Big West), Toledo (Mid-American), Southern Cal (Pac-10), Auburn (SEC), Texas A&M (Southwest) and BYU (WAC). The top dark horses: Virginia, Pittsburgh, Washington, Houston, Louisville and Arizona.

1. NOTRE DAME FIGHTING IRISH

Coach: Lou Holtz **1989 Rankings:** 2 AP, 3 UPI

Holtz is the fiercest scarecrow in America. Just look at what he's fashioned in four years at Notre Dame: 1) Rebuilt from the ashes of the Gerry Faust era; 2) three straight bowls for the Irish, after missing postseason play four of the previous six years; 3) a 24-1 record the last two seasons; 4) a national title in 1988; 5) a No. 2 ranking in 1989. That last fact may be all the motivation Lou and Co. need this season. The skill players on offense include TB Ricky Watters, FL/KR Raghib Ismail, TE Derek Brown and FB Rodney Culver. The new man leading them is QB Rick Mirer, who changes the attack from horizontal to vertical. The defense returns two All-Americans in DT Chris Zorich and CB Todd Lyght, and gets two potential All-Americans back in DT George Williams and LB Mike Stonebreaker. Book the Irish for a Jan. 1 bowl date — and maybe another national crown.

Projected Record: 10-1

2. MIAMI HURRICANES

Coach: Dennis Erickson **1989 Rankings:** 1 AP, 1 UPI

Erickson made the big move from the wheat fields of Pullman, Wash., to the glitter of Miami, and merely won a national title. A repeat is possible, because he has at his disposal one of the nation's most explosive offenses. QB Craig Erickson is the triggerman; he's unbeaten as a starter — Miami's loss last year to Florida State came with Erickson on the sidelines. The supporting cast includes a solid runner in FB Leonard Conley, three great targets in WRs Randal Hill and Wesley Carroll and TE Rob Chudzinski (combined 115 catches in '89), PK Carlos Huerta (18-22 on three-pointers), and a veteran line. The schedule is difficult by Miami standards (six '89 bowl teams), and the defense, led by DT Russell Maryland and LB Maurice Crum, is inexperienced, but Miami should outscore most teams.

Projected Record: 10-1

3. FLORIDA STATE SEMINOLES

Coach: Bobby Bowden **1989 Rankings:** 3 AP, 2 UPI

Like Lou Holtz's 24-1 record the last two seasons? Bowden is 32-4 the last three. Two of those defeats were to Miami. Bowden is No. 2 to Penn State's Joe Paterno in victories among active coaches, has had 13 straight winning seasons, and is 7-0-1 in his last eight bowl games. The only thing missing is a national title. If he can get through an October that includes dates at Miami and Auburn, he could get it. Bowden's talent problem this year: a lot of good players, few great ones. He has two good QBs in Brad Johnson and Casey Weldon, a trio of decent backs, led by TB Amp Lee, lots of young WRs like Lawrence Dawsey, and so on. The defense lacks experience, too, but a sleepy September slate — East Carolina, Georgia Southern, Tulane, Virginia Tech — should give it time to grow.

Projected Record: 10-1

4. COLORADO BUFFALOES

Coach: Bill McCartney **1989 Rankings:** 4 AP, 4 UPI

Question of the 1990 season: Has McCartney built a powerhouse in Boulder, or did the '89 Buffs only achieve as a testimonial to the fallen Sal Aunese? On paper, Colorado belongs in the Top 5. The defense returns seven starters, including bookend OLBs Alfred Williams and Kanavis McGhee, NT Joel Steed, SS Tim James and CB Dave McCloughan. The I-bone attack is keyed by elusive QB Darian Hagan, features a fleet of backs including TB Eric Bieniemy, and the best offensive line west of Ann Arbor, Mich. The non-conference schedule is taxing, with dates against Tennessee, Illinois, Texas and Washington. The Big Eight slate is tame by comparison, though the Buffs visit Nebraska.

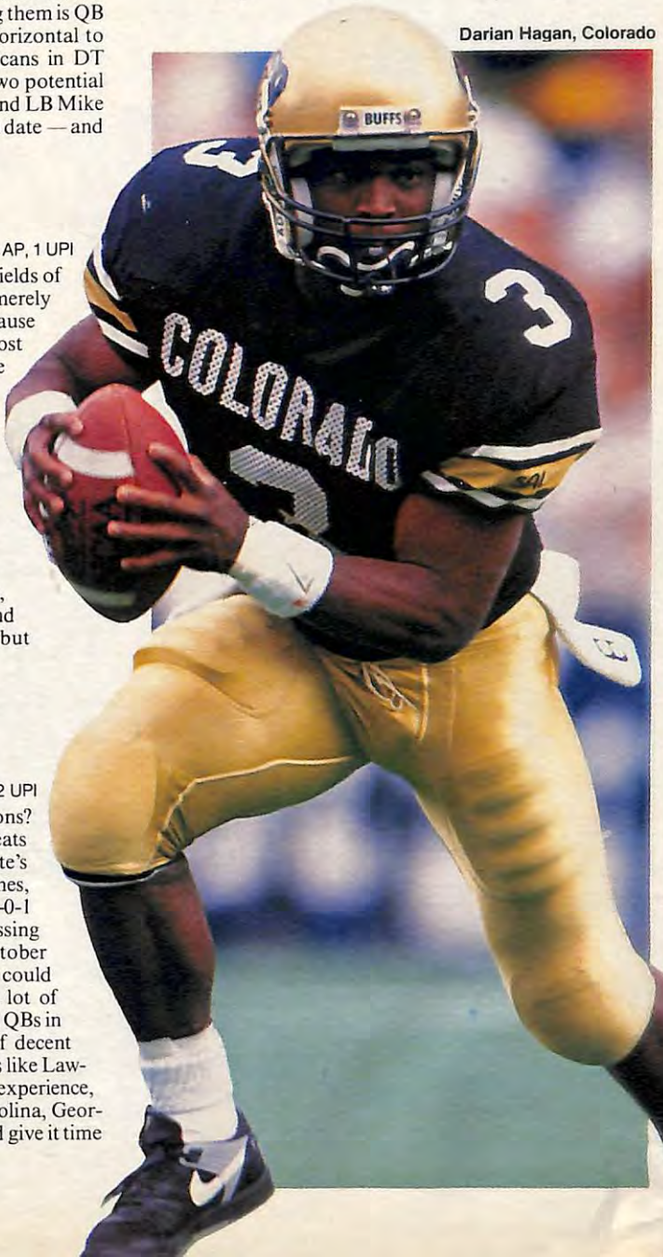
Projected Record: 11-1

5. MICHIGAN WOLVERINES

Coach: Gary Moeller **1989 Rankings:** 7 AP, 8 UPI

Bo Schembechler played a dirty trick on Moeller, retiring when he did. He left the cupboard full of talent, which will only make the expectations of the Michigan alumni more fervent than ever. The Wolverines have the best offensive line in the land — five returning starters, including OG Dean Dingman and big, bad OT Greg Skrepenak (6-6,

Darian Hagan, Colorado



320). The skill spots feature WR Derrick Alexander, who may be the next Anthony Carter; QB Elvis Grbac, who is no stranger to big games; and Tony Boles, who will either return to TB or move to WR, depending on his knee rehabilitation. The defense returns eight starters, including LBs Alex Marshall and Erick Anderson, and the best secondary in the nation, led by SS Tripp Welborne. A third consecutive Big Ten title and a run at No. 1 are possible — if Moe can escape the shadow of Bo.
Projected Record: 9-2

6. AUBURN TIGERS

Coach: Pat Dye **1989 Rankings:** 6 AP, 6 UPI

Dye is fast becoming a legend in Alabama. He'll never eclipse Bear Bryant, of course, but an 81-25-2 mark at Auburn is very impressive. The 1990 unit looks like his typical squad — a lot of impressive veterans, a lot of untested but equally impressive-looking youngsters. The offense builds around TBs Stacy Danley and James Joseph and OG Ed King. The defense is rock-solid, with eight returning starters, including the entire secondary and all three down linemen — David Rocker, Fernando Horn and Walter Tate, who had 171 tackles (16 for losses) between them in 1989. The Tigers' motivation is further enhanced by revenge dates against the only two teams that beat them last year, Tennessee and Florida State.
Projected Record: 10-1

7. SOUTHERN CAL TROJANS

Coach: Larry Smith **1989 Rankings:** 8 AP, 9 UPI

Smith is a West Coast version of Lou Holtz — he's rebuilt a traditional power. The Trojans have won three straight Pac-10 titles and last year gave Smith his first Rose Bowl victory. Despite the loss of two star defensive players (Mark Carrier, Junior Seau) to the NFL a year early, USC still rules the Pac-10. The key players are TB Ricky Ervins and QB Todd Marinovich. They should carry a defense that is inexperienced, at least by USC standards. Still, NT Don Gibson and LBs Craig Hartsuyker and Scott Ross are quality talents. A tough schedule — Syracuse, Penn State, Ohio State, Notre Dame, Washington, UCLA — compromises the Trojans' chances for a Top 10 finish.
Projected Record: 9-3

8. PITTSBURGH PANTHERS

Coach: Paul Hackett **1989 Rankings:** 17 AP, 19 UPI

Hackett steps in for Mike Gottfried and gets to prove what the former coach's critics claimed for years — that Gottfried recruited great talent but didn't know how to coach it. The two top skill players on offense are TB Curvin Richards and QB Alex Van Pelt, and the talent at WR and OL isn't bad. The defense has as many quality talents — DE Keith Hamilton, LBs Ricardo McDonald and Curtis Bray, and FS Louis Riddick — as any team ranked higher. The schedule presents the usual Eastern Indies, plus Notre Dame. However, it shouldn't keep Pitt out of the Top 10 or a Jan. 1 bowl, unless there's another season long on potential but short on victories.
Projected Record: 9-2

9. ILLINOIS FIGHTING ILLINI

Coach: John Mackovic **1989 Rankings:** 10 AP, 10 UPI

A lot of Illini fans will take Jeff George's name in vain if Illinois goes 10-1 and misses a Rose Bowl berth or national title shot by the slimmest of margins. Mackovic has a tremendous defense, featuring a pair of All-Americans, NT Moe Gardner and LB Darrick Brownlow, and more all-conference returnees than you could fit into a compact car. It should be as mean and tough as last year's unit. The offensive line is outstanding and there are some good receivers, but there is no big-name RB or proven QB, which is where George would have fit in. A home date against Colorado is the early test, a Nov. 10 visit to Ann Arbor the gut check.
Projected Record: 8-3

10. CLEMSON TIGERS

Coach: Ken Hatfield **1989 Rankings:** 12 AP, 11 UPI

There are no guarantees this year with Clemson. Is there talent on campus? Does George Bush hate broccoli? Whoever gets the call at RB and QB will operate behind a big, veteran line, always aware that PK Chris Gardocki is nearby for an easy three. The defense returns six players who were first- or second-team All-ACC performers last year, including DT Vance Hammond, ILB Doug Brewster and FS Robert O'Neal. The problem is enduring the transition of power from Danny Ford, a regular guy with a wad of tobacco in his cheek and a way with kids, to Hatfield, a bible-thumping organizer who, prior to two straight SWC titles at Arkansas, wasn't held in real high regard in Hog Heaven.
Projected Record: 9-2

11. VIRGINIA CAVALIERS

Coach: George Welsh **1989 Rankings:** 18 AP, 15 UPI

History lesson: It was just nine years ago that Virginia went 1-10. And between 1969 and 1982, the Cavs had just one winning season. They were the Northwestern of the Eastern Seaboard. Today, they're Top 10 material. The offense has excellent balance with QB Shawn Moore, WR Herman Moore and TB Terry Kirby. The defense has some holes up front but is fortified in the rear with an excellent secondary led by CB Tony Covington and FS Keith McMeans. Welsh's best friend is a schedule that brings the top three ACC contenders — Clemson, N.C. State and Georgia Tech — to Charlottesville. A victory over Clemson — a team the Cavs are 0-29 against lifetime — in September could be the flint for a fireball rankings rise.
Projected Record: 10-1

12. TEXAS A&M AGGIES

Coach: R.C. Slocum **1989 Rankings:** 20 AP

The second year of the Slocum era could yield a SWC title — if RB Darren Lewis returns to 1988 form. His slump last year was hardly his fault, but he returns a bit more motivated in '90 and he's armed with a line that has the look of a herd of cattle. What he needs is for QB Lance Pavlas, or any QB, to give the offense more balance. The defense is missing some of the big names of past editions, but returns six starters, including LB William Thomas and CB Kevin Smith. The schedule, outside of road dates at LSU, Arkansas and Houston, is kind.
Projected Record: 11-1

13. ALABAMA CRIMSON TIDE

Coach: Gene Stallings **1989 Rankings:** 9 AP, 7 UPI

Everyone down Tuscaloosa way is saying nice things about Stallings, a Bear protégé. Maybe they should at least say thanks to Bill Curry, who left Stallings plenty of talent — C Roger Shultz, TE Lamonde Russell, QB Gary Hollingsworth, TB Siran Stacy, DT George Thornton, CB Efrum Thomas, and so on. The early part of the schedule is easy, Penn State visits and the Auburn showdown is back in Birmingham.
Projected Record: 9-2

14. TENNESSEE VOLUNTEERS

Coach: Johnny Majors **1989 Rankings:** 5 AP, 5 UPI

Majors managed to win last year without a stellar defense. If it improves under new management — DT Mark Moore and OLB Darryl Hardy are its leaders — then the Vols can contend again. The offense, with nine starters returning, has its usual track team of receivers, like Carl Pickens, plus Andy Kelly at QB and Chuck Webb at TB. The Vols travel to Auburn, but 'Bama and Notre Dame visit Knoxville.
Projected Record: 9-3

15. NEBRASKA CORNHUSKERS

Coach: Tom Osborne **1989 Rankings:** 11 AP, 12 UPI

It wouldn't be a Top 20 without the 'Huskers. The 1990 squad lacks the big-name stars of past years. The offense rebuilds around three great athletes, QB Mickey Joseph, RB Leodis Flowers and WB Nate Turner. The usual assortment of large farmboys mans the trenches. The defense is experienced in the backfield, led by SS Reggie Cooper, and questionable up front, though Osborne thinks the Joe Sims-led line will be more than adequate. The schedule is once again a coach's best friend.
Projected Record: 10-1

16. PENN STATE NITTANY LIONS

Coach: Joe Paterno **1989 Rankings:** 15 AP, 14 UPI

There are similarities between Penn State and Nebraska — a lot of good talent, but little of it recognizable. Paterno's offense builds around a host of decent running backs who sat behind Blair Thomas last season. Paterno hopes erratic QB Tony Sacca finally settles in. The defense has seven returning starters, but most of the stars have moved on. The newcomers who will step to the fore include Heroback Gary Brown (he could move to TB) and DTs Frank Giannetti and Todd Burger. The Lions must visit USC, Alabama and Notre Dame.
Projected Record: 8-3

17. WASHINGTON HUSKIES

Coach: Don James **1989 Rankings:** 23 AP, 20 UPI

The Huskies destroyed Florida in the Freedom Bowl and return a host of key performers. QB Cary Conklin is gone, but mobile lefty Scott Brunell is expected to step right in. TB Greg Lewis is a proven 1,000-yard runner and the OL is solid. Defensively, Washington has assembled its best club since 1984, led by NT John Cook, DE Travis Richardson and LB James Clifford. Don James hasn't been to the Rose Bowl since '82. With USC and UCLA both visiting Husky Stadium, he has a fighting chance to get back to Pasadena this season.
Projected Record: 8-3

18. ARKANSAS RAZORBACKS

Coach: Jack Crowe **1989 Rankings:** 13 AP, 13 UPI

Crowe inherits a team that has won two straight SWC titles but lost two straight Cotton Bowls. He has an underrated QB in Quinn Grovey and enough backs to make the offense fly. The defense should be improved with LBs Mick Thomas and Ty Mason. The non-conference slate features three weak sisters, and Texas A&M visits Fayetteville.
Projected Record: 9-2

19. OKLAHOMA SOONERS

Coach: Gary Gibbs **1989 Rankings:** Unranked

Consider the off-the-field garbage Gibbs inherited and the rash of injuries that devastated the team on both sides of the line, and last year's 7-4 record doesn't look that bad. Armed with some of those now-healthy bodies, OU will be very tough this year. The offense is anchored by OT Terran Manning and TB Mike Gaddis, and will try to exploit the speed of WR Arthur Guess with more passing by QB Steve Collins. DT Scott Evans and LB Frank Blevins spearhead a defense that is younger than past units, but has plenty of talent.
Projected Record: 8-3

20. HOUSTON COUGARS

Coach: John Jenkins **1989 Rankings:** 14 AP

Andre took his Heisman hard-Ware to the NFL, and coach Jack Pardee and LB Lamar Lathon went with him. But WR Manny Hazard and RB Chuck Weatherspoon will still run-and-shoot their way through the SWC, with new QB David Klingler throwing the ball all over Texas. The defense is a big question, but with Houston scoring over 40 points per game, it might not matter.
Projected Record: 9-2

OTHERS TO WATCH

21. Michigan State — Underrated QB Dan Enos and WR Courtney Hawkins are the offensive stars, but the Spartans' strength is once again the defense.

22. BYU — QB Ty Detmer outdid everyone last year except Andre Ware. He, along with TE Chris Smith and RB Matt Bellini, will wreak havoc on the WAC.

23. Louisville — Howard Schnellenberger's revival of a moribund program is nearly complete. QB Browning Nagle is in Craig Erickson's class. Nine starters, including LB Mark Sander, return to a tremendous defense.

24. Syracuse — Despite the loss of WR Rob Moore, RB Michael Owens and QB Bill Scharr, coach Dick MacPherson returns a nucleus of talent on both sides of the ball.

25. South Carolina — There is life after QB Todd Ellis and a steroids scandal, thanks to a big line and coach Sparky Woods' energy.

26. Ohio State — No Snow (Carlos), but QB Greg Frey and FB Scottie Graham lead an offense that should score often. The defense needs help.

27. Georgia — QB Greg Talley is the center-stage attraction as coach Ray Goff tries to overcome a 6-6 season with a lot of young talent.

28. North Carolina State — Dick Sheridan's late fade of '89 shouldn't linger. Safeties Jesse Campbell and Fernandus Vinson are prime-time players.

29. UCLA — It's hard to imagine another down season for the Bruins. Two transfers, LB Arnold Ale and DE Mike Chalenski, will lift a defensive that was porous in '89.

30. Arizona — A great secondary, an active defensive front and enough backs to form a few relay teams make the Wildcats dangerous longshots again.

3-YEAR T.Q. SUMMARY

Talent Quotients (T.Q.s) are based solely on physical abilities and past histories of each club. T.Q.s preclude such factors as emotion and momentum (see "Rating System" on page 19). The following represents ever-changing talent levels in the NFL.

NFC EAST

	WR	OL	QB	RB	DL	LB	DB	ST	C/O	DRFT	TOTAL
NY Giants 1990	**6.0**	**6.0**	**7.0**	**5.5**	**6.0**	**8.5**	**5.5**	**8.5**	**8.0**	**5.0**	**66.0**
1989	6.0	4.5	7.5	5.5	6.5	8.0	5.0	5.5	7.5	6.0	62.0
1988	5.5	5.0	7.5	6.5	6.5	8.5	5.5	3.5	7.5	5.0	61.0
Philadelphia 1990	**6.5**	**5.5**	**8.5**	**6.0**	**9.0**	**5.5**	**6.0**	**4.5**	**7.0**	**5.5**	**64.0**
1989	7.5	5.0	8.5	5.5	6.5	4.5	5.0	4.0	6.0	4.0	56.5
1988	6.0	3.5	6.0	4.5	6.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.5	5.5	48.0
Washington 1990	**8.5**	**7.5**	**6.0**	**7.0**	**6.5**	**5.5**	**5.5**	**5.0**	**8.0**	**4.0**	**63.5**
1989	8.5	7.0	6.5	7.0	7.0	6.0	5.5	4.5	8.0	4.0	64.0
1988	8.0	7.0	6.5	6.5	7.5	6.0	6.5	5.5	9.0	4.5	67.0
Phoenix 1990	**6.5**	**5.0**	**3.5**	**3.0**	**5.5**	**6.5**	**6.0**	**7.5**	**4.0**	**5.0**	**52.5**
1989	7.0	6.0	7.0	5.5	5.5	4.5	5.5	4.0	5.5	6.0	56.5
1988	6.5	6.0	7.0	5.5	5.0	4.5	6.0	4.5	4.5	5.5	55.0
Dallas 1990	**5.0**	**5.0**	**6.0**	**3.0**	**5.5**	**6.0**	**4.0**	**5.0**	**5.0**	**5.5**	**50.0**
1989	4.5	5.5	4.5	7.5	6.0	4.5	4.5	5.5	5.0	7.5	55.0
1988	4.0	5.0	5.0	7.0	5.5	4.5	5.5	7.5	6.0	6.0	56.0
'90 DIVISION AVG.	**6.5**	**5.8**	**6.2**	**4.9**	**6.5**	**6.4**	**5.4**	**6.1**	**6.4**	**5.0**	**59.2**
'89 DIVISION AVG.	6.7	5.6	6.8	6.2	6.3	5.5	5.1	4.7	6.4	5.5	58.8
'88 DIVISION AVG.	6.0	5.3	6.4	6.0	6.1	5.5	5.5	5.0	6.3	5.3	57.4

NFC CENTRAL

	WR	OL	QB	RB	DL	LB	DB	ST	C/O	DRFT	TOTAL
Minnesota 1990	**7.5**	**7.0**	**5.5**	**7.5**	**9.0**	**6.0**	**6.5**	**6.0**	**6.0**	**4.0**	**65.0**
1989	8.5	6.5	6.5	5.5	8.5	6.5	7.0	5.5	7.0	4.0	65.5
1988	8.0	6.5	6.0	7.0	9.0	6.0	6.0	5.5	7.0	6.0	67.0
Chicago 1990	**6.0**	**7.0**	**4.5**	**7.0**	**7.0**	**6.0**	**5.5**	**6.0**	**6.5**	**5.5**	**61.0**
1989	6.5	7.0	5.5	7.0	8.5	6.0	6.0	5.5	8.0	8.0	68.0
1988	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	7.5	7.0	5.5	7.0	7.0	5.5	65.5
Detroit 1990	**3.5**	**5.0**	**4.0**	**8.0**	**5.0**	**8.5**	**4.5**	**9.0**	**6.0**	**6.5**	**60.0**
1989	3.5	5.0	4.0	6.0	5.0	7.5	4.0	9.0	5.5	6.0	55.5
1988	4.5	6.0	5.5	6.0	5.0	6.0	3.0	7.5	4.0	6.0	53.5
Green Bay 1990	**6.5**	**6.0**	**6.5**	**5.5**	**4.0**	**7.5**	**5.5**	**5.0**	**7.0**	**6.5**	**60.0**
1989	5.5	6.5	4.0	5.5	4.0	7.0	5.5	4.0	5.5	6.0	53.5
1988	5.5	6.0	4.5	5.5	4.5	7.0	5.5	5.5	5.0	5.5	54.5
Tampa Bay 1990	**7.0**	**5.0**	**6.0**	**6.5**	**4.0**	**6.0**	**5.5**	**5.5**	**4.0**	**5.5**	**55.0**
1989	6.0	5.5	5.5	5.5	6.0	5.0	5.5	6.5	5.0	5.5	56.0
1988	5.0	3.5	6.5	4.5	4.5	6.0	3.5	4.5	5.0	6.0	49.0
'90 DIVISION AVG.	**6.1**	**6.0**	**5.3**	**6.9**	**5.8**	**6.8**	**5.5**	**6.3**	**5.9**	**5.6**	**60.2**
'89 DIVISION AVG.	6.0	6.1	5.1	5.9	6.4	6.4	5.6	6.1	6.2	5.9	59.7
'88 DIVISION AVG.	5.9	5.7	5.8	5.9	6.1	6.4	4.7	6.0	5.6	5.8	57.9

NFC WEST

	WR	OL	QB	RB	DL	LB	DB	ST	C/O	DRFT	TOTAL
San Francisco 1990	**8.0**	**6.5**	**9.5**	**7.5**	**7.0**	**6.0**	**5.5**	**6.0**	**9.0**	**5.5**	**70.5**
1989	7.0	6.5	8.5	7.5	6.5	6.0	7.0	6.0	8.0	5.0	68.0
1988	7.5	5.5	8.0	7.0	6.0	5.5	7.5	4.5	8.5	5.5	65.5
LA Rams 1990	**8.0**	**7.5**	**8.0**	**6.0**	**4.0**	**7.0**	**4.5**	**5.5**	**7.5**	**5.0**	**63.0**
1989	7.0	8.0	7.5	6.0	5.0	7.0	6.0	7.0	7.0	7.5	68.0
1988	4.5	7.5	5.5	5.5	4.0	6.5	7.0	6.5	5.0	6.0	58.0
New Orleans 1990	**6.0**	**6.0**	**5.0**	**7.0**	**3.5**	**8.5**	**4.5**	**6.0**	**7.5**	**5.0**	**59.0**
1989	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.5	5.0	8.0	4.0	8.0	7.5	5.0	62.0
1988	5.0	7.0	5.5	7.0	6.5	7.5	5.0	8.5	7.5	5.0	64.5
Atlanta 1990	**6.0**	**6.5**	**6.0**	**3.5**	**5.5**	**5.0**	**5.5**	**5.5**	**5.5**	**6.0**	**55.0**
1989	3.5	6.5	5.5	5.5	6.5	5.5	5.0	4.5	5.0	7.0	54.5
1988	5.0	6.5	5.0	6.5	6.0	4.5	4.0	5.5	4.5	6.0	53.5
'90 DIVISION AVG.	**7.0**	**6.6**	**7.1**	**6.0**	**5.0**	**6.6**	**5.0**	**5.8**	**7.4**	**5.4**	**61.9**
'89 DIVISION AVG.	5.9	6.8	6.9	6.4	5.8	6.6	5.5	6.4	6.9	6.1	63.1
'88 DIVISION AVG.	5.6	6.6	6.0	6.5	5.6	6.0	5.9	6.3	6.4	5.6	60.4
'90 NFC AVG.	**6.5**	**6.1**	**6.1**	**5.9**	**5.8**	**6.6**	**5.3**	**6.1**	**6.5**	**5.3**	**60.3**
'89 NFC AVG.	6.2	6.1	6.2	6.1	6.2	6.1	5.4	5.7	6.5	5.8	60.4
'88 NFC AVG.	5.9	5.8	6.1	6.1	6.0	6.0	5.3	5.7	6.1	5.6	58.4

AFC EAST

	WR	OL	QB	RB	DL	LB	DB	ST	C/O	DRFT	TOTAL
Miami 1990	**7.5**	**5.0**	**8.5**	**5.5**	**5.5**	**6.5**	**6.0**	**6.5**	**8.0**	**6.5**	**65.5**
1989	7.0	5.0	8.5	4.5	4.0	5.5	3.5	5.0	8.0	7.0	58.0
1988	7.0	5.0	9.0	5.5	4.5	5.5	4.0	5.0	8.5	4.5	58.5
Buffalo 1990	**5.5**	**6.0**	**7.0**	**6.5**	**5.0**	**7.5**	**5.5**	**5.5**	**6.0**	**6.0**	**60.5**
1989	5.5	5.5	7.5	6.5	7.5	8.0	5.5	8.0	6.5	4.0	64.5
1988	6.5	5.5	8.0	4.5	6.0	7.5	4.0	6.5	6.0	5.5	60.0
Indianapolis 1990	**4.5**	**5.0**	**5.5**	**7.5**	**6.5**	**8.0**	**5.0**	**7.5**	**4.5**	**6.5**	**60.5**
1989	5.5	6.0	5.5	9.0	6.0	7.0	5.0	6.0	5.5	5.5	61.0
1988	5.5	7.0	5.0	8.5	5.5	6.5	5.0	6.0	6.0	4.5	59.5
NY Jets 1990	**6.5**	**4.0**	**6.0**	**6.5**	**5.0**	**4.0**	**5.5**	**6.0**	**5.5**	**7.0**	**56.0**
1989	7.0	5.5	6.0	6.5	3.0	5.0	5.5	8.0	5.0	5.0	56.5
1988	6.5	5.0	6.0	6.5	4.5	5.5	5.0	6.5	5.0	5.0	55.5
New England 1990	**6.5**	**5.5**	**4.0**	**6.0**	**5.5**	**5.5**	**5.0**	**4.5**	**5.0**	**7.5**	**55.0**
1989	6.0	7.0	6.0	7.5	5.0	5.5	7.5	4.0	5.5	6.0	60.0
1988	6.5	6.0	6.5	4.5	6.0	6.0	6.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	58.5
'90 DIVISION AVG.	**6.1**	**5.1**	**6.2**	**6.4**	**5.5**	**6.3**	**5.4**	**6.0**	**5.8**	**6.7**	**59.5**
'89 DIVISION AVG.	6.2	5.8	6.7	6.8	5.1	6.2	5.4	6.2	6.1	5.5	60.0
'88 DIVISION AVG.	6.4	5.7	6.9	5.9	5.3	6.2	4.9	5.9	6.2	5.0	58.4

AFC CENTRAL

	WR	OL	QB	RB	DL	LB	DB	ST	C/O	DRFT	TOTAL
Cincinnati 1990	**8.0**	**8.0**	**8.0**	**7.5**	**5.0**	**5.5**	**6.5**	**4.0**	**8.0**	**5.5**	**66.0**
1989	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	5.5	5.5	7.5	5.5	7.0	4.5	67.5
1988	7.0	7.0	6.5	5.5	5.0	6.0	6.5	4.5	5.5	5.5	59.0
Houston 1990	**8.0**	**7.5**	**8.0**	**7.0**	**6.5**	**5.0**	**5.0**	**7.5**	**6.0**	**5.0**	**65.5**
1989	7.0	8.0	7.5	8.0	6.5	5.0	6.0	5.5	5.0	5.0	63.5
1988	6.5	7.0	6.0	6.5	6.0	4.5	6.5	4.0	3.5	5.0	55.5
Pittsburgh 1990	**6.0**	**6.5**	**6.5**	**6.5**	**5.0**	**6.0**	**7.5**	**6.5**	**8.5**	**5.0**	**64.0**
1989	4.5	6.5	5.0	5.0	4.5	5.5	6.0	5.5	7.0	7.0	56.5
1988	4.5	6.0	4.0	5.0	5.0	7.0	6.0	5.5	7.5	4.5	55.0
Cleveland 1990	**7.0**	**5.0**	**7.5**	**6.5**	**6.0**	**7.5**	**7.0**	**5.5**	**7.5**	**4.0**	**63.5**
1989	6.0	6.0	8.0	7.0	6.0	5.5	6.5	5.0	6.0	5.5	61.5
1988	5.5	6.5	8.0	7.0	6.0	6.0	7.0	5.0	7.0	5.5	63.5
'90 DIVISION AVG.	**7.3**	**6.8**	**7.5**	**6.9**	**5.6**	**6.0**	**6.5**	**5.9**	**7.5**	**4.9**	**64.8**
'89 DIVISION AVG.	6.4	7.1	7.1	7.0	5.6	5.4	6.5	5.4	6.3	5.5	62.3
'88 DIVISION AVG.	5.9	6.6	6.1	6.0	5.5	5.9	6.5	4.8	5.9	5.1	58.3

AFC WEST

	WR	OL	QB	RB	DL	LB	DB	ST	C/O	DRFT	TOTAL
Kansas City 1990	**4.0**	**8.0**	**5.0**	**7.5**	**7.5**	**7.0**	**9.0**	**6.0**	**7.5**	**6.0**	**67.5**
1989	6.0	6.0	5.5	6.5	6.0	4.0	8.0	5.5	7.0	5.5	60.0
1988	6.0	6.0	5.5	6.0	6.0	4.0	8.0	7.5	4.0	5.5	58.5
Denver 1990	**8.0**	**6.5**	**8.0**	**7.0**	**6.0**	**7.0**	**5.5**	**7.5**	**8.0**	**3.5**	**67.0**
1989	8.5	5.0	8.5	5.0	4.5	5.0	4.5	5.0	7.5	5.5	59.0
1988	8.0	6.0	9.0	5.5	5.5	6.0	5.0	6.0	8.0	5.0	64.0
LA Raiders 1990	**7.5**	**6.0**	**4.5**	**8.0**	**6.5**	**5.0**	**5.0**	**8.5**	**7.0**	**5.5**	**63.5**
1989	8.0	5.0	5.5	8.0	7.0	5.0	5.0	7.5	6.5	4.5	62.0
1988	7.0	4.5	4.0	8.5	7.0	5.0	6.5	5.0	6.0	7.0	60.5
San Diego 1990	**6.0**	**5.0**	**4.5**	**5.0**	**7.5**	**7.0**	**5.5**	**4.0**	**6.0**	**6.0**	**56.5**
1989	5.5	4.5	3.5	6.0	7.5	5.5	5.0	7.0	5.5	6.0	56.0
1988	6.5	5.0	3.0	5.0	6.5	6.5	4.0	5.5	5.0	5.0	52.0
Seattle 1990	**4.5**	**4.5**	**7.0**	**6.0**	**4.5**	**4.5**	**5.0**	**6.5**	**6.0**	**7.0**	**55.5**
1989	5.5	5.5	7.0	8.5	5.0	6.0	5.0	6.5	6.5	5.0	60.5
1988	6.0	5.5	6.0	8.5	6.0	6.5	5.0	7.5	7.0	5.0	63.0
'90 DIVISION AVG.	**6.0**	**6.0**	**5.8**	**6.7**	**6.4**	**6.1**	**6.0**	**6.5**	**6.9**	**5.6**	**62.0**
'89 DIVISION AVG.	6.7	5.2	6.0	6.8	6.0	5.1	5.5	6.3	6.6	5.3	59.5
'88 DIVISION AVG.	6.7	5.4	5.5	6.7	6.2	5.6	5.7	6.3	6.0	5.5	59.6
'90 AFC AVG.	**6.4**	**5.9**	**6.4**	**6.6**	**5.9**	**6.1**	**5.9**	**6.1**	**6.7**	**5.8**	**61.9**
'89 AFC AVG.	6.4	6.0	6.6	6.9	5.6	5.6	5.8	6.0	6.3	5.4	60.5
'88 AFC AVG.	6.4	5.9	6.2	6.2	5.7	5.9	5.6	5.7	6.0	5.2	58.8

NFL AVERAGES

	WR	OL	QB	RB	DL	LB	DB	ST	C/O	DRFT	TOTAL
'90 NFL AVG.	**6.4**	**6.0**	**6.3**	**6.3**	**5.8**	**6.4**	**5.6**	**6.1**	**6.6**	**5.6**	**61.1**
'89 NFL AVG.	6.3	6.0	6.4	6.5	5.9	5.9	5.6	5.8	6.4	5.6	60.4
'88 NFL AVG.	6.1	5.8	6.1	6.2	5.8	5.9	5.5	5.7	6.1	5.4	58.6

1989

One commissioner (Tagliabue) hired, five head coaches (Glanville, Berry, Campbell, Stallings, Walton) fired. The Packers and Steelers climbed, the Cowboys sank and the 49ers, well, they were Super. A week-by-week look back at 1989.

One spring day long before training camps opened, commissioner Pete Rozelle announced his intent to retire and asked the NFL to find a replacement. The next day, some strong allegations came out concerning gamblers and Pete Rose. By the time baseball fully investigated and disposed of Rose, lost its own commissioner to a heart attack, searched and found a new one, the NFL still hadn't found a replacement for Rozelle.

The last season of the decade lurched to an unglamorous start with the league dictating to fans how loud they could be, an effort in vocal etiquette that quietly died and went away. Detroit's run-and-shoot offense looked limp and lame, then came to life in the last half of the season. Oregon legalized an NFL point spread lottery for the purpose of raising funds for the state's beleaguered collegiate athletic departments. Brian Bosworth was sidelined again by his glass shoulder, leaving his Seattle employers that most unwanted commodity — a tackler who can't take a hit.

Victor Kiam raged out loud against Raymond Berry's coaching in the New England press box. We learned John Elway was suffocating in Denver and that he passed out Kit Kat bars on Halloween. Interim TV analyst Bobby Beathard suggested Jimmy Johnson's Cowboys might go winless. Buddy Ryan sent a defender after Johnson's kicker and Johnson yammered about bounties and the size of Ryan's rear end. There was Majik in Green Bay, but not enough for a playoff berth. Sam Wyche was giddy over a 61-7 rout against Jerry Glanville, and he reminded raucous Cincinnati fans they didn't live in Cleveland during a game against Seattle in which Steve Largent caught a record 100th TD pass.

The Rams stunned the Giants in overtime. The Steelers wound up deep in the playoffs, after looking deep in trouble when the season opened. The 49ers were as dominant in the postseason as the A's were in baseball. The Broncos got to the Super Bowl and redefined postseason embarrassment. The 49ers ended the season, and the decade, as the team that couldn't be stopped. One can only hope the same will not be true of the league's noise committee. —Bart Wright

WEEK ONE — Sept. 10

Dallas suffered its first-ever shutout on Opening Day in a 28-0 loss to the Saints.... **Barry Sanders**, the 1988 Heisman winner, made his debut with the Lions and rushed for 71 yards and one TD as Detroit lost to Phoenix, 13-16.... On his first official play, Atlanta CB **Deion Sanders** returned a punt 15 yards. The second time, he returned one 68 yards for a TD. It wasn't enough; the Rams beat the Falcons, 31-21. Sanders' TD came less than a week after he hit a home run for the New York Yankees. He became the first professional athlete to hit a major league homer and score an NFL TD in the same week since 1919 when **Jim Thorpe** did it.... The Steelers suffered the worst loss in their history, a 51-0 blanking administered by the Browns.... The 49ers handed the Colts their sixth consecutive Opening Day setback, 30-24. Despite the loss, **Eric Dickerson** became the seventh NFL running back to surpass 10,000 career rushing yards. Dickerson did it in 91 games to break **Jim Brown**'s record of 98. **O.J. Simpson** reached 10,000 in 110 games while **Walter Payton** got there in 113, **Tony Dorsett** in 122, **Franco Harris** in 134 and **John Riggins** in 156.

WEEK TWO — Sept. 17

On a Sunday of comeback victories, the Eagles had the biggest storybook finish, scoring two TDs in the final two minutes to beat Washington, 42-37. The final TD was set up by a fumble recovery and a lateral that was returned 77 yards. One play later, **Randall Cunningham**'s fifth TD pass proved to be the winner. Cunningham finished with a team-record 447 yards, only hours after signing a five-year, $15 million contract. In the loss, **Gerald Riggs** rushed for 221 yards, tying the decade high set by **Bo Jackson** of the Raiders in a 1987 game against Seattle. Riggs' performance broke the Redskins' single-game record of 206 yards set by **George Rogers** in 1985.... San Francisco's **Joe Montana** took the 49ers 70 yards in the closing minutes for the winning score in a 20-16 victory over Tampa Bay.... Green Bay fell behind New Orleans, 24-7, at halftime but rallied to win, 35-34, on the passing of **Don Majkowski**, who had 18 consecutive completions.... Miami's **Dan Marino**, with three TD passes in the Dolphins' 24-10 win over New England, set a record for throwing 200 career TD passes in the fewest number of career games, 89. The previous mark: **Johnny Unitas**, 121.... **Herschel Walker** of the Cowboys played his first game in the state of Georgia since his college days, rushing for 85 yards and scoring two TDs in Dallas' 27-21 loss to Atlanta. The Cowboys started 0-2 for the first time since 1963.... Cleveland's **Bernie Kosar** threw three TD passes and the Jets' **Ken O'Brien** was intercepted four times as the Browns prevailed, 38-24.... In Cincinnati's 41-10 win over the Steelers, the Bengals amassed 520 yards on offense. The Bengals also sacked **Bubby Brister** six times.... In the Giants' 24-14 win over the Lions, **Phil Simms** completed 12 of 14 second-half passes for two TDs. **Barry Sanders** caught six passes for 96 yards and rushed 12 times for 57 yards.... In Chicago's 38-7 win over the Vikings, **Neal Anderson** rushed for two TDs and caught a pass for a third.... In Houston's 34-27 win over San Diego, **Warren Moon** threw two TDs and ran for a third.... **Eric Dickerson** played his first game in Los Angeles since his Oct. 31, 1987, trade and rushed for 116 yards on 21 carries, but the Colts lost to the Rams, 31-17.... In New England's 24-10 loss to Miami, **Stanley Morgan** caught six passes for 88 yards and became the seventh player in NFL history to exceed 10,000 yards receiving.... Week Two produced 714 total points, fifth-highest in history.

WEEK THREE — Sept. 24

Week Three was dominated by big numbers, dramatic comebacks and another orgy of points (693). Five teams scored at least 40 points and seven quarterbacks threw for more than 300 yards.... **Joe Montana** tossed for 428 yards and five TDs, rallying San Francisco to a 38-28 win over the Eagles. Montana completed 25 of 34 passes as the 49ers overcame a 28-17 deficit, completing 11 of 12 for 227 yards and four TDs in the fourth quarter.... **Jim Kelly** threw for five TDs, including the game winner to **Andre Reed** in OT, as Buffalo defeated Houston, 47-41.... **Dan Marino** passed for 427 yards but **Ken O'Brien** tossed three TD passes in the second half to lead the Jets to a 40-33 victory over the Dolphins.... **Mike Tomczak** passed for a career-high 302 yards and **Neal Anderson** rushed for 116 as the Bears beat Detroit, 47-27. **Barry Sanders** ran for 126 yards before leaving the game with a hip pointer.... Pittsburgh, routed by a combined 92-10 in Weeks One and Two, parlayed two interceptions into a 27-14 upset over Minnesota. The Steelers had five sacks, their most since Nov. 22, 1987.... New York started 3-0 for the first time since 1968, beating the Cardinals, 35-7, intercepting four of **Gary Hogeboom**'s first eight passes.... **Dave Krieg** threw three TDs in the final eight minutes of the first half and Seattle went on to blast New England, 24-3.... **Greg Bell** rushed for 221 yards and two TDs as the Rams held off Green Bay, 41-38. Bell's total tied the decade high set by **Bo Jackson** in 1987 and matched by **Gerald Riggs** in Week One.... **John Elway** threw two TDs and scored on a 29-yard run as the Broncos beat the Raiders, 31-21.... Tampa Bay snapped a six-game losing streak against New Orleans with a 20-10 win.... San Diego, which defeated Kansas City, 21-6, had five interceptions in a game for the first time since Sept. 20, 1981.... In the Colts' 13-9 win over the Falcons, DE **Ezra Johnson** had two sacks and forced two fumbles.

WEEK FOUR — Oct. 1

The Houston defense held Miami's **Dan Marino** to a career-low 103 passing yards as the Oilers defeated the Dolphins, 39-7. Oilers QB **Warren Moon** completed 19 of 23 for 254 yards. Marino was benched with 11:29 to play after completing 11 of 29.... Steelers QB **Bubby Brister** completed a team-record 15 consecutive passes in Pittsburgh's 23-3 win over Detroit.... The Giants defeated Dallas, 30-13, to get off to their best start in 21 years at 4-0. The Cowboys, at 0-4, were off to their worst start since 1963.... **David Fulcher** had three interceptions as the Bengals came back from a 17-7 deficit to defeat the Chiefs, 21-17.... Green Bay DB **Dave Brown** made the 57th interception of his career, tying him for seventh all-time and helping his Packers beat the Falcons, 23-21.... Buffalo WR **Andre Reed** had his third straight 100-yard receiving game as the Bills trampled the Patriots, 31-10.

WEEK FIVE — Oct. 8

Jim Everett threw a pair of TD passes and **Mike Lansford** kicked four FGs as the Rams beat the Falcons, 26-14. The Rams (5-0) preserved the league's only perfect record.... Tampa Bay's 42-35 win over the Bears was the Bucs' first against Chicago in 13 games. Bucs QB **Vinny Testaverde** threw for 269 yards and three TDs before leaving in the fourth quarter with a knee injury.... Rookie PK **Pete Stoyanovich** booted a 35-yard FG to lift the Dolphins over the Browns, 13-10, in OT.... Minnesota beat Detroit, 24-17, with the help of LB **Mike Merriweather**, who returned an interception 15 yards for a TD.... **Don Majkowski** passed for 313 yards and four TDs in Green Bay's 31-13 win over Dallas.... **Randall Cunningham** of the Eagles passed for only 106 yards, his lowest total since becoming a starter late in 1986, in a 21-19 win over the Giants. **Anthony Toney** scored the game-winner on a 2-yard run with 2:18 left.... **Mark Rypien** threw two fourth-quarter TDs as the Redskins beat Phoenix, 30-28.... **Bobby Humphrey** ran 17 yards for the winning TD with 1:03 left as Denver beat San Diego, 16-10.... Kansas City trailed Seattle by 13 points at the half, but rallied to win, 20-16. **Christian Okoye** had 156 yards in the Chiefs' first victory in the Kingdome since 1981.... **Joe Montana** threw two TD passes to **John Taylor** and a third to **Jerry Rice** in San Francisco's 24-20 win over the Saints. A replay on Rice's TD showed that he fumbled at the New Orleans 1-yard line (the ball squirted out of the end zone), and that the play should have been ruled a touchback.... Indianapolis not only beat Buffalo, 37-14, the Colts knocked QB **Jim Kelly** out of the game with a separated shoulder.... The Patriots broke a three-game losing streak, beating the Oilers, 23-13. The win pushed **Doug Flutie**'s overall record as a starter in Sullivan Stadium to 11-0 (6-0 with New England; 5-0 with Boston College).

WEEK SIX — Oct. 15

Herschel Walker, traded to the Vikings from Dallas Oct. 12, gained 148 yards in 18 carries in his Minnesota debut, sparking a 26-14 victory over Green Bay.... **Bo Jackson** made his 1989 Raider debut, picking up 85 yards in a 20-14 win over Kansas City.... Detroit won its first game, beating Tampa Bay, 17-16, on **Rodney Peete**'s fourth-down, 5-yard TD run with 23 seconds to play.... Miami shut out Cincinnati in the second half, ending the Bengals' 12-game home winning streak, 20-13.... Houston scored twice in the final five minutes to beat the Bears, 33-28.... Pittsburgh intercepted **Bernie Kosar** four times and forced three other turnovers in a 17-7 win at Cleveland.... The Giants converted three fourth-down plays in a 20-17 win over the Redskins.... Seattle's **Joe Nash** and **Jeff Bryant** blocked kicks by San Diego's **Chris Bahr** in the final four minutes to preserve a 17-16 win over the Chargers.... The Broncos held **Eric Dickerson** to 35 yards on 13 carries in their 14-3 win over the Colts.... **Randall Cunningham** completed 16 of 29 for 192 yards, surpassing the 10,000-yard mark for his career. He also ran for 70 yards in the Eagles' 17-5 win over the Cardinals.

WEEK SEVEN — Oct. 22

Buffalo's **Frank Reich**, subbing for **Jim Kelly**, threw three TDs in the Bills' 34-3 rout of the Jets.... **Eric Dickerson** ran for a season-high 152 yards in the Colts' 23-12 win over the Bengals.... The Redskins had a 22-point lead entering the fourth quarter against Tampa Bay, but had to hold on for a 32-28 win as Bucs QB **Vinny Testaverde** threw for three fourth-quarter scores.... Seattle remained winless at home (0-3), losing to the Broncos, 24-21, in OT.... FB **Tom Rathman**, who didn't catch a pass in his collegiate career at Nebraska, caught 11 for 103 yards in San Francisco's 37-20 win over New England....

NFL 1989 SEASON PLAY

Super Bowl XXIV, Jan. 28, 1990 — San Francisco 55, Denver 10

AMERICAN FOOTBALL CONFERENCE

PLAYOFF RESULTS

Pittsburgh 26, Houston 23 (OT)
Cleveland 34, Buffalo 30
Denver 24, Pittsburgh 23
Denver 37, Cleveland 21

BUFFALO (9-7-0)

(W)	27	at Miami	24
(L)	14	Denver	28
(W)	47	at Houston, OT	41
(W)	31	New England	10
(L)	14	at Indianapolis	37
(W)	23	LA Rams	20
(W)	34	NY Jets	3
(W)	31	Miami	17
(L)	28	at Atlanta	30
(W)	30	Indianapolis	7
(L)	24	at New England	33
(W)	24	Cincinnati	7
(L)	16	at Seattle	17
(L)	19	New Orleans	22
(L)	10	at San Francisco	21
(W)	37	at NY Jets	0

CINCINNATI (8-8-0)

(L)	14	at Chicago	17
(W)	41	Pittsburgh	10
(W)	21	Cleveland	14
(W)	21	at Kansas City	17
(W)	26	at Pittsburgh	16
(L)	13	Miami	20
(L)	12	Indianapolis	23
(W)	56	Tampa Bay	23
(L)	7	at LA Raiders	28
(L)	24	at Houston	26
(W)	42	Detroit	7
(L)	7	at Buffalo	24
(W)	21	at Cleveland	0
(L)	17	Seattle	24
(W)	61	Houston	7
(L)	21	at Minnesota	29

CLEVELAND (9-6-1)

(W)	51	at Pittsburgh	0
(W)	38	NY Jets	24
(L)	14	at Cincinnati	21
(W)	16	Denver	13
(L)	10	at Miami, OT	13
(L)	7	Pittsburgh	17
(W)	27	Chicago	7
(W)	28	Houston	17
(W)	42	at Tampa Bay	31
(W)	17	at Seattle	7
(T)	10	Kansas City, OT	10
(L)	10	at Detroit	13
(L)	0	Cincinnati	21
(L)	17	at Indianapolis, OT	23
(W)	23	Minnesota, OT	17
(W)	24	at Houston	20

DENVER (11-5-0)

(W)	34	Kansas City	20
(W)	28	at Buffalo	14
(W)	31	LA Raiders	21
(L)	13	at Cleveland	16
(W)	16	San Diego	10
(W)	14	Indianapolis	3
(W)	24	at Seattle, OT	21
(L)	24	Philadelphia	28
(W)	34	Pittsburgh	7
(W)	18	at Kansas City	13
(W)	14	at Washington	10
(W)	41	Seattle	14
(L)	13	at LA Raiders, OT	16
(L)	7	NY Giants	14
(W)	37	at Phoenix	0
(L)	16	at San Diego	19

HOUSTON (9-7-0)

(L)	7	at Minnesota	38
(W)	34	at San Diego	27
(L)	41	Buffalo, OT	47
(W)	39	Miami	7
(L)	13	at New England	23
(W)	33	at Chicago	28
(W)	27	Pittsburgh	0
(L)	17	at Cleveland	28
(W)	35	Detroit	31
(W)	26	Cincinnati	24
(W)	23	LA Raiders	7
(L)	0	at Kansas City	34
(W)	23	at Pittsburgh	16
(W)	20	Tampa Bay	17
(L)	7	at Cincinnati	61
(L)	20	Cleveland	24

INDIANAPOLIS (8-8-0)

(L)	24	San Francisco	30
(L)	17	at LA Rams	31
(W)	13	Atlanta	9
(W)	17	at NY Jets	10
(W)	37	Buffalo	14
(L)	3	at Denver	14
(W)	23	at Cincinnati	12
(L)	20	New England, OT	23
(L)	13	at Miami	19
(L)	7	at Buffalo	30
(W)	27	NY Jets	10
(W)	10	San Diego	6
(L)	16	at New England	22
(W)	23	Cleveland, OT	17
(W)	42	Miami	13
(L)	6	at New Orleans	41

KANSAS CITY (8-7-1)

(L)	20	at Denver	34
(W)	24	LA Raiders	19
(L)	6	at San Diego	21
(L)	17	Cincinnati	21
(W)	20	at Seattle	16
(L)	14	at LA Raiders	20
(W)	36	Dallas	28
(L)	17	at Pittsburgh	23
(W)	20	Seattle	10
(L)	13	Denver	16
(T)	10	at Cleveland, OT	10
(W)	34	Houston	0
(W)	26	Miami	21
(W)	21	at Green Bay	3
(L)	13	San Diego	20
(W)	27	at Miami	24

LA RAIDERS (8-8-0)

(W)	40	San Diego	14
(L)	19	at Kansas City	24
(L)	21	at Denver	31
(L)	20	Seattle	24
(W)	14	at NY Jets	7
(W)	20	Kansas City	14
(L)	7	at Philadelphia	10
(W)	37	Washington	24
(W)	28	Cincinnati	7
(L)	12	at San Diego	14
(L)	7	at Houston	23
(W)	24	New England	21
(W)	16	Denver, OT	13
(W)	18	Phoenix	14
(L)	17	at Seattle	23
(L)	17	at NY Giants	34

MIAMI (8-8-0)

(L)	24	Buffalo	27
(W)	24	at New England	10
(L)	33	NY Jets	40
(L)	7	at Houston	39
(W)	13	Cleveland, OT	10
(W)	20	at Cincinnati	13
(W)	23	Green Bay	20
(L)	17	at Buffalo	31
(W)	19	Indianapolis	13
(W)	31	at NY Jets	23
(W)	17	at Dallas	14
(L)	14	Pittsburgh	34
(L)	21	at Kansas City	26
(W)	31	New England	10
(L)	13	at Indianapolis	42
(L)	24	Kansas City	27

NEW ENGLAND (5-11-0)

(W)	27	at NY Jets	24
(L)	10	Miami	24
(L)	3	Seattle	24
(L)	10	at Buffalo	31
(W)	23	Houston	13
(L)	15	at Atlanta	16
(L)	20	at San Francisco	37
(W)	23	at Indianapolis, OT	20
(L)	26	NY Jets	27
(L)	24	New Orleans	28
(W)	33	Buffalo	24
(L)	21	at LA Raiders	24
(W)	22	Indianapolis	16
(L)	10	at Miami	31
(L)	10	at Pittsburgh	28
(L)	20	LA Rams	24

NY JETS (4-12-0)

(L)	24	New England	27
(L)	24	at Cleveland	38
(W)	40	at Miami	33
(L)	10	Indianapolis	17
(L)	7	LA Raiders	14
(L)	14	at New Orleans	29
(L)	3	at Buffalo	34
(L)	10	San Francisco	23
(W)	27	at New England	26
(L)	23	Miami	31
(L)	10	at Indianapolis	27
(W)	27	Atlanta	7
(W)	20	at San Diego	17
(L)	0	Pittsburgh	13
(L)	14	at LA Rams	38
(L)	0	Buffalo	37

PITTSBURGH (9-7-0)

(L)	0	Cleveland	51
(L)	10	at Cincinnati	41
(W)	27	Minnesota	14
(W)	23	at Detroit	13
(L)	16	Cincinnati	26
(W)	17	at Cleveland	7
(L)	0	at Houston	27
(W)	23	Kansas City	17
(L)	7	at Denver	34
(L)	0	Chicago	20
(W)	20	San Diego	17
(W)	34	at Miami	14
(L)	16	Houston	23
(W)	13	at NY Jets	0
(W)	28	New England	10
(W)	31	at Tampa Bay	22

SAN DIEGO (6-10-0)

(L)	14	at LA Raiders	40
(L)	27	Houston	34
(W)	21	Kansas City	6
(W)	24	at Phoenix	13
(L)	10	at Denver	16
(L)	16	Seattle	17
(L)	13	NY Giants	20
(L)	7	at Seattle	10
(W)	20	Philadelphia	17
(W)	14	LA Raiders	12
(L)	17	at Pittsburgh	20
(L)	6	at Indianapolis	10
(L)	17	NY Jets	20
(L)	21	at Washington	26
(W)	20	at Kansas City	13
(W)	19	Denver	16

SEATTLE (7-9-0)

(L)	7	at Philadelphia	31
(L)	24	Phoenix	34
(W)	24	at New England	3
(W)	24	at LA Raiders	20
(L)	16	Kansas City	20
(W)	17	at San Diego	16
(L)	21	Denver, OT	24
(W)	10	San Diego	7
(L)	10	at Kansas City	20
(L)	7	Cleveland	17
(L)	3	at NY Giants	15
(L)	14	at Denver	41
(W)	17	Buffalo	16
(W)	24	at Cincinnati	17
(W)	28	LA Raiders	17
(L)	0	Washington	29

NATIONAL FOOTBALL CONFERENCE

PLAYOFF RESULTS

LA Rams 21, Philadelphia 7
San Francisco 41, Minnesota 13
LA Rams 19, NY Giants 13 (OT)
San Francisco 30, LA Rams 3

ATLANTA (3-13-0)

(L)	21	LA Rams	31
(W)	27	Dallas	21
(L)	9	at Indianapolis	13
(L)	21	at Green Bay (Mil)	23
(L)	14	at LA Rams	26
(W)	16	New England	15
(L)	20	at Phoenix	34
(L)	13	at New Orleans	20
(W)	30	Buffalo	28
(L)	3	at San Francisco	45
(L)	17	New Orleans	26
(L)	7	at NY Jets	27
(L)	10	San Francisco	23
(L)	17	at Minnesota	43
(L)	30	Washington	31
(L)	24	Detroit	31

CHICAGO (6-10-0)

(W)	17	Cincinnati	14
(W)	38	Minnesota	7
(W)	47	at Detroit	27
(W)	27	Philadelphia	13
(L)	35	at Tampa Bay	42
(L)	28	Houston	33
(L)	7	at Cleveland	27
(W)	20	LA Rams	10
(L)	13	at Green Bay	14
(W)	20	at Pittsburgh	0
(L)	31	Tampa Bay	32
(L)	14	at Washington	38
(L)	16	at Minnesota	27
(L)	17	Detroit	27
(L)	28	Green Bay	40
(L)	0	at San Francisco	26

DALLAS (1-15-0)

(L)	0	at New Orleans	28
(L)	21	at Atlanta	27
(L)	7	Washington	30
(L)	13	NY Giants	30
(L)	13	at Green Bay	31
(L)	14	San Francisco	31
(L)	28	at Kansas City	36
(L)	10	Phoenix	19
(W)	13	at Washington	3
(L)	20	at Phoenix	24
(L)	14	Miami	17
(L)	0	Philadelphia	27
(L)	31	LA Rams	35
(L)	10	at Philadelphia	20
(L)	0	at NY Giants	15
(L)	10	Green Bay	20

DETROIT (7-9-0)

(L)	13	Phoenix	16
(L)	14	at NY Giants	24
(L)	27	Chicago	47
(L)	3	Pittsburgh	23
(L)	17	at Minnesota	24
(W)	17	at Tampa Bay	16
(L)	7	Minnesota	20
(L)	20	at Green Bay (Mil), OT	23
(L)	31	at Houston	35
(W)	31	Green Bay	22
(L)	7	at Cincinnati	42
(W)	13	Cleveland	10
(W)	21	New Orleans	14
(W)	27	at Chicago	17
(W)	33	Tampa Bay	7
(W)	31	at Atlanta	24

GREEN BAY (10-6-0)

(L)	21	Tampa Bay	23
(W)	35	New Orleans	34
(L)	38	at LA Rams	41
(W)	23	Atlanta (Mil)	21
(W)	31	Dallas	13
(L)	14	at Minnesota	26
(L)	20	at Miami	23
(W)	23	Detroit (Mil), OT	20
(W)	14	Chicago	13
(L)	22	at Detroit	31
(W)	21	at San Francisco	17
(W)	20	Minnesota (Mil)	19
(W)	17	at Tampa Bay	16
(L)	3	Kansas City	21
(W)	40	at Chicago	28
(W)	20	at Dallas	10

LA RAMS (11-5-0)

(W)	31	at Atlanta	21
(W)	31	Indianapolis	17
(W)	41	Green Bay	38
(W)	13	at San Francisco	12
(W)	26	Atlanta	14
(L)	20	at Buffalo	23
(L)	21	New Orleans	40
(L)	10	at Chicago	20
(L)	21	at Minnesota, OT	23
(W)	31	NY Giants	10
(W)	37	Phoenix	14
(W)	20	at New Orleans, OT	17
(W)	35	at Dallas	31
(L)	27	San Francisco	30
(W)	38	NY Jets	14
(W)	24	at New England	20

MINNESOTA (10-6-0)

(W)	38	Houston	7
(L)	7	at Chicago	38
(L)	14	at Pittsburgh	27
(W)	17	Tampa Bay	3
(W)	24	Detroit	17
(W)	26	Green Bay	14
(W)	20	at Detroit	7
(L)	14	at NY Giants	24
(W)	23	LA Rams, OT	21
(W)	24	at Tampa Bay	10
(L)	9	at Philadelphia	10
(L)	19	at Green Bay (Mil)	20
(W)	27	Chicago	16
(W)	43	Atlanta	17
(L)	17	at Cleveland, OT	23
(W)	29	Cincinnati	21

NEW ORLEANS (9-7-0)

(W)	28	Dallas	0
(L)	34	at Green Bay	35
(L)	10	at Tampa Bay	20
(L)	14	Washington	16
(L)	20	San Francisco	24
(W)	29	NY Jets	14
(W)	40	at LA Rams	21
(W)	20	Atlanta	13
(L)	13	at San Francisco	31
(W)	28	at New England	24
(W)	26	at Atlanta	17
(L)	17	LA Rams, OT	20
(L)	14	at Detroit	21
(W)	22	at Buffalo	19
(W)	30	Philadelphia	20
(W)	41	Indianapolis	6

NY GIANTS (12-4-0)

(W)	27	at Washington	24
(W)	24	Detroit	14
(W)	35	Phoenix	7
(W)	30	at Dallas	13
(L)	16	at Philadelphia	21
(W)	20	Washington	17
(W)	20	at San Diego	18
(W)	24	Minnesota	14
(W)	20	at Phoenix	13
(L)	10	at LA Rams	31
(W)	15	Seattle	3
(L)	24	at San Francisco	34
(L)	17	Philadelphia	24
(W)	14	at Denver	7
(W)	15	Dallas	0
(W)	34	LA Raiders	17

PHILADELPHIA (11-5-0)

(W)	31	Seattle	7
(W)	42	at Washington	37
(L)	28	San Francisco	38
(L)	13	at Chicago	27
(W)	21	NY Giants	19
(W)	17	at Phoenix	5
(W)	10	LA Raiders	7
(W)	28	at Denver	24
(L)	17	at San Diego	20
(L)	3	Washington	10
(W)	10	Minnesota	9
(W)	27	at Dallas	0
(W)	24	at NY Giants	17
(W)	20	Dallas	10
(L)	20	at New Orleans	30
(W)	31	Phoenix	14

PHOENIX (5-11-0)

(W)	16	at Detroit	13
(W)	34	at Seattle	24
(L)	7	at NY Giants	35
(L)	13	San Diego	24
(L)	28	at Washington	30
(L)	5	Philadelphia	17
(W)	34	Atlanta	20
(W)	19	at Dallas	10
(L)	13	NY Giants	20
(W)	24	Dallas	20
(L)	14	at LA Rams	37
(L)	13	Tampa Bay	14
(L)	10	Washington	29
(L)	14	at LA Raiders	16
(L)	0	Denver	37
(L)	14	at Philadelphia	31

SAN FRANCISCO (14-2-0)

(W)	30	at Indianapolis	24
(W)	20	at Tampa Bay	16
(W)	38	at Philadelphia	28
(L)	12	LA Rams	13
(W)	24	at New Orleans	20
(W)	31	at Dallas	14
(W)	37	New England	20
(W)	23	at NY Jets	10
(W)	31	New Orleans	13
(W)	45	Atlanta	3
(L)	17	Green Bay	21
(W)	34	NY Giants	24
(W)	23	at Atlanta	10
(W)	30	at LA Rams	27
(W)	21	Buffalo	10
(W)	26	Chicago	0

TAMPA BAY (5-11-0)

(W)	23	at Green Bay	21
(L)	16	San Francisco	20
(W)	20	New Orleans	10
(L)	3	at Minnesota	17
(W)	42	Chicago	35
(L)	16	Detroit	17
(L)	28	at Washington	32
(L)	23	at Cincinnati	56
(L)	31	Cleveland	42
(L)	10	Minnesota	24
(W)	32	at Chicago	31
(W)	14	at Phoenix	13
(L)	16	Green Bay	17
(L)	17	at Houston	20
(L)	7	at Detroit	33
(L)	22	Pittsburgh	31

WASHINGTON (10-6-0)

(L)	24	NY Giants	27
(L)	37	Philadelphia	42
(W)	30	at Dallas	7
(W)	16	at New Orleans	14
(W)	30	Phoenix	28
(L)	17	at NY Giants	20
(W)	32	Tampa Bay	28
(L)	24	at LA Raiders	37
(L)	3	Dallas	13
(W)	10	at Philadelphia	3
(L)	10	Denver	14
(W)	38	Chicago	14
(W)	29	at Phoenix	10
(W)	26	San Diego	21
(W)	31	at Atlanta	30
(W)	29	at Seattle	0

1989 FINAL STANDINGS

AFC	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA	HOME	AWAY	AFC	NFC	DIV
EAST											
x-Buffalo	9	7	0	.563	409	317	6-2-0	3-5-0	8-4-0	1-3-0	6-2-0
Indianapolis	8	8	0	.500	298	301	6-2-0	2-6-0	7-5-0	1-3-0	4-4-0
Miami	8	8	0	.500	331	379	4-4-0	4-4-0	6-8-0	2-0-0	4-4-0
New England	5	11	0	.313	297	391	3-5-0	2-6-0	5-7-0	0-4-0	4-4-0
NY Jets	4	12	0	.250	253	411	1-7-0	3-5-0	3-9-0	1-3-0	2-6-0
CENTRAL											
x-Cleveland	9	6	1	.594	334	254	5-2-1	4-4-0	6-5-1	3-1-0	3-3-0
y-Houston	9	7	0	.563	365	412	6-2-0	3-5-0	6-6-0	3-1-0	3-3-0
y-Pittsburgh	9	7	0	.563	265	326	4-4-0	5-3-0	6-6-0	3-1-0	1-5-0
Cincinnati	8	8	0	.500	404	285	5-3-0	3-5-0	6-6-0	2-2-0	5-1-0
WEST											
x-Denver	11	5	0	.688	362	226	6-2-0	5-3-0	9-3-0	2-2-0	6-2-0
Kansas City	8	7	1	.531	318	286	5-3-0	3-4-1	6-7-1	2-0-0	3-5-0
LA Raiders	8	8	0	.500	315	297	7-1-0	1-7-0	6-6-0	2-2-0	3-5-0
Seattle	7	9	0	.438	241	327	3-5-0	4-4-0	7-5-0	0-4-0	4-4-0
San Diego	6	10	0	.375	266	290	4-4-0	2-6-0	4-8-0	2-2-0	4-4-0

NFC	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA	HOME	AWAY	AFC	NFC	DIV
EAST											
x-NY Giants	12	4	0	.750	348	252	7-1-0	5-3-0	4-0-0	8-4-0	6-2-0
y-Philadelphia	11	5	0	.688	342	274	6-2-0	5-3-0	3-1-0	8-4-0	7-1-0
Washington	10	6	0	.625	386	308	4-4-0	6-2-0	2-2-0	8-4-0	4-4-0
Phoenix	5	11	0	.313	258	377	2-6-0	3-5-0	1-3-0	4-8-0	2-6-0
Dallas	1	15	0	.063	204	393	0-8-0	1-7-0	0-2-0	1-13-0	1-7-0
CENTRAL											
x-Minnesota	10	6	0	.625	351	275	8-0-0	2-6-0	2-2-0	8-4-0	6-2-0
Green Bay	10	6	0	.625	362	356	6-2-0	4-4-0	0-2-0	10-4-0	5-3-0
Detroit	7	9	0	.438	312	364	4-4-0	3-5-0	1-3-0	6-6-0	4-4-0
Chicago	6	10	0	.375	358	377	4-4-0	2-6-0	2-2-0	4-8-0	2-6-0
Tampa Bay	5	11	0	.313	320	419	2-6-0	3-5-0	0-4-0	5-7-0	3-5-0
WEST											
x-San Francisco	14	2	0	.875	442	253	6-2-0	8-0-0	4-0-0	10-2-0	5-1-0
y-LA Rams	11	5	0	.688	426	344	6-2-0	5-3-0	3-1-0	8-4-0	4-2-0
New Orleans	9	7	0	.563	386	301	5-3-0	4-4-0	4-0-0	5-7-0	3-3-0
Atlanta	3	13	0	.188	279	437	3-5-0	0-8-0	2-2-0	1-11-0	0-6-0

x-division champion; y-wild card

1989 TOP PERFORMANCES

Individual — Regular Season

PASSING

458 — Joe Montana, 49ers vs. Rams, 12-11 (30-42, 3 TD)
454 — Jim Everett, Rams vs. Saints, 11-26 (29-51, 1 TD)
447 — R. Cunningham, Eagles vs. Redskins, 9-17 (34-46, 5 TD)
428 — Joe Montana, 49ers vs. Eagles, 9-24 (25-34, 5 TD)
427 — Dan Marino, Dolphins vs. Jets, 9-24 (33-55, 3 TD)
414 — Warren Moon, Oilers vs. Browns, 12-23 (32-51, 2 TD)
401 — Randall Cunningham, Eagles vs. Bears, 10-2 (32-64, 1 TD)
401 — Mark Rypien, Redskins vs. Bears, 11-26 (30-47, 4 TD)
399 — Boomer Esiason, Bengals vs. Lions, 11-19 (30-39, 3 TD)
389 — Jim McMahon, Chargers vs. Oilers, 9-17 (27-45, 2 TD)
386 — Ken O'Brien, Jets vs. Patriots, 11-5 (22-29, 2 TD)
379 — Troy Aikman, Cowboys vs. Cardinals, 11-12 (21-40, 2 TD)
370 — Vinny Testaverde, Bucs vs. Browns, 11-5 (27-50, 2 TD)
368 — Jim Everett, Rams vs. Colts, 9-17 (28-35, 3 TD)
367 — Don Majkowski, Packers vs. Lions, 10-29 (29-45, 2 TD)
367 — Boomer Esiason, Bengals vs. Vikings, 12-26 (31-54, 3 TD)
364 — Mark Rypien, Redskins vs. Raiders, 10-29 (27-53, 1 TD)
363 — Jim Kelly, Bills vs. Oilers, 9-24 (17-29, 5 TD)
359 — Dan Marino, Dolphins vs. Jets, 11-12 (18-34, 3 TD)
357 — Don Majkowski, Packers vs. Lions, 11-12 (34-59, 1 TD)
356 — Jim Kelly, Bills vs. Patriots, 11-19 (21-41, 1 TD)
355 — Steve Grogan, Patriots vs. Colts, 10-29 (28-46, 1 TD)
354 — Don Majkowski, Packers vs. Saints, 9-17 (25-32, 3 TD)

POSTSEASON

405 — Jim Kelly, Bills vs. Browns, 1-6-90 (28-54, 4 TD)
385 — John Elway, Broncos vs. Browns, 1-14-90 (20-36, 3 TD)
315 — Warren Moon, Oilers vs. Steelers, 12-31-89 (29-48, 2 TD)
315 — Jim Everett, Rams vs. Giants, 1-7-90 (25-44, 2 TD)
297 — Joe Montana, 49ers vs. Broncos, 1-28-90 (22-29, 5 TD)

RUSHING

221 — Gerald Riggs, Redskins vs. Eagles, 9-27 (29 att., 1 TD)
221 — Greg Bell, Rams vs. Packers, 9-24 (28 att., 2 TD)
210 — Greg Bell, Rams vs. Patriots, 12-24 (26 att., 1 TD)
184 — Barry Sanders, Lions vs. Packers, 10-29 (30 att., 0 TD)
176 — Marion Butts, Chargers vs. Chiefs, 12-17 (39 att., 0 TD)
170 — Christian Okoye, Chiefs vs. Cowboys, 10-22 (33 att., 2 TD)
159 — Bo Jackson, Raiders vs. Bengals, 11-5 (13 att., 2 TD)
158 — Dalton Hilliard, Saints vs. Falcons, 11-19 (29 att., 1 TD)
158 — Barry Sanders, Lions vs. Falcons, 12-24 (20 att., 3 TD)
156 — Christian Okoye, Chiefs vs. Seahawks, 10-8 (30 att., 1 TD)
152 — Eric Dickerson, Colts vs. Bengals, 10-22 (31 att., 1 TD)
148 — Herschel Walker, Vikings vs. Packers, 10-15 (18 att., 0 TD)
148 — Thurman Thomas, Bills vs. Dolphins, 10-29 (27 att., 1 TD)
148 — Christian Okoye, Chiefs vs. Dolphins, 12-3 (32 att., 1 TD)
146 — Neal Anderson, Bears vs. Bengals, 9-10 (21 att., 0 TD)
145 — Barry Sanders, Lions vs. Browns, 11-23 (28 att., 0 TD)
144 — Bo Jackson, Raiders vs. Redskins, 10-29 (19 att., 1 TD)
141 — James Brooks, Bengals vs. Oilers, 11-13 (19 att., 1 TD)
137 — Eric Dickerson, Colts vs. Browns, 12-10 (26 att., 0 TD)
131 — Roger Craig, 49ers vs. Colts, 9-10 (24 att., 2 TD)
131 — James Brooks, Bengals vs. Bucs, 10-29 (17 att., 1 TD)
131 — Eric Dickerson, Colts vs. Jets, 11-19 (31 att., 1 TD)
131 — Christian Okoye, Chiefs vs. Packers, 12-10 (38 att., 1 TD)

POSTSEASON

125 — Roger Craig, 49ers vs. Vikings, 1-6-90 (18 att., 1 TD)
124 — Greg Bell, Rams vs. Eagles, 12-31-89 (27 att., 1 TD)
120 — Merril Hoge, Steelers vs. Broncos, 1-7-90 (16 att., 1 TD)
120 — Ottis Anderson, Giants vs. Rams, 1-7-90 (24 att., 1 TD)
100 — Merril Hoge, Steelers vs. Oilers, 12-31-89 (17 att., 1 TD)

RECEIVING

336 — Willie Anderson, Rams vs. Saints, 11-26 (15 rec., 1 TD)
286 — John Taylor, 49ers vs. Rams, 12-11 (11 rec., 2 TD)
248 — Richard Johnson, Lions vs. Saints, 12-3 (8 rec., 1 TD)
230 — Henry Ellard, Rams vs. Colts, 9-17 (12 rec., 3 TD)
203 — James Dixon, Cowboys vs. Cardinals, 11-12 (6 rec., 1 TD)
194 — Tim McGee, Bengals vs. Lions, 11-19 (11 rec., 1 TD)
190 — Michael Haynes, Falcons vs. Redskins, 12-17 (6 rec., 2 TD)
186 — Webster Slaughter, Browns vs. Bears, 10-23 (8 rec., 1 TD)
184 — Webster Slaughter, Browns vs. Oilers, 10-29 (4 rec., 2 TD)
177 — Jerry Rice, 49ers vs. Giants, 11-27 (7 rec., 1 TD)
172 — Richard Johnson, Lions vs. Giants, 9-17 (9 rec., 1 TD)
169 — Sterling Sharpe, Packers vs. Bucs, 12-3 (8 rec., 2 TD)
167 — Ricky Sanders, Redskins vs. Falcons, 12-17 (7 rec., 0 TD)
166 — Roy Green, Cardinals vs. Seahawks, 9-17 (8 rec., 3 TD)
165 — Henry Ellard, Rams vs. Falcons, 10-8 (8 rec., 0 TD)
164 — Jerry Rice, 49ers vs. Eagles, 9-24 (6 rec., 2 TD)
164 — Sterling Sharpe, Packers vs. Rams, 9-24 (8 rec., 1 TD)
164 — Mark Carrier, Bucs vs. Bears, 11-19 (6 rec., 1 TD)
163 — Jerry Rice, 49ers vs. Colts, 9-10 (6 rec., 1 TD)
163 — Henry Ellard, Rams vs. Cardinals, 11-19 (5 rec., 2 TD)
162 — Anthony Miller, Chargers vs. Oilers, 9-17 (7 rec., 2 TD)
162 — John Taylor, 49ers vs. Falcons, 12-3 (5 rec., 1 TD)

POSTSEASON

150 — Thurman Thomas, Bills vs. Browns, 1-6-90 (13 rec., 2 TD)
149 — Steve Jordan, Vikings vs. 49ers, 1-6-90 (9 rec., 0 TD)
148 — Jerry Rice, 49ers vs. Broncos, 1-28-90 (7 rec., 3 TD)
136 — Ernest Givins, Oilers vs. Steelers, 12-31-89 (11 rec., 2 TD)
125 — Henry Ellard, Rams vs. Giants, 1-7-90 (8 rec., 0 TD)
123 — Michael Young, Broncos vs. Browns, 1-14-90 (2 rec., 1 TD)

Team — Regular Season

POINTS

61 — Cincinnati vs. Houston, 12-17-89
56 — Cincinnati vs. Tampa Bay, 10-29-89
51 — Cleveland vs. Pittsburgh, 9-10-89
47 — Chicago vs. Detroit, 9-24-89
47 — Buffalo vs. Houston, 9-24-89

YARDS

584 — Cincinnati vs. Houston, 12-17-89
546 — Cincinnati vs. Detroit, 11-19-89
542 — Chicago vs. Detroit, 9-24-89
524 — Miami vs. NY Jets, 9-24-89
520 — Cincinnati vs. Pittsburgh, 9-17-89

RUSHING

280 — Buffalo vs. Miami, 10-29-89
267 — Philadelphia vs. Phoenix, 12-24-89
245 — Kansas City vs. Seattle, 11-5-89
238 — Minnesota vs. Green Bay, 10-15-89
234 — San Francisco vs. Atlanta, 11-12-89

PASSING

447 — Cincinnati vs. Detroit, 11-19-89
446 — Miami vs. NY Jets, 9-24-89
439 — San Francisco vs. LA Rams, 12-11-89
420 — Washington vs. LA Raiders, 10-29-89
415 — LA Rams vs. New Orleans, 11-26-89 (OT)

SCORING BY QUARTERS*

AFC	1	2	3	4	OT	TOT	DIFF
Denver	84	114	57	104	3	362	136
Opponents	44	53	50	76	3	226	
Cincinnati	61	147	98	98	0	404	119
Opponents	50	97	56	82	0	285	
Buffalo	59	117	92	135	6	409	92
Opponents	62	44	88	123	0	317	
Cleveland	48	112	104	64	6	334	80
Opponents	34	67	82	62	9	254	
Kansas City	67	137	53	61	0	318	32
Opponents	74	83	47	82	0	286	
LA Raiders	67	87	91	67	3	315	18
Opponents	77	77	65	78	0	297	
Indianapolis	53	66	53	120	6	298	-3
Opponents	67	82	58	91	3	301	
San Diego	52	43	67	104	0	266	-24
Opponents	42	92	67	89	0	290	
Houston	50	128	85	102	0	365	-47
Opponents	95	106	97	108	6	412	
Miami	78	96	73	81	3	331	-48
Opponents	57	128	77	117	0	379	
Pittsburgh	57	91	72	45	0	265	-61
Opponents	78	110	60	78	0	326	
Seattle	72	60	41	68	0	241	-86
Opponents	81	80	86	77	3	327	
New England	47	66	71	110	3	297	-94
Opponents	82	144	58	107	0	391	
NY Jets	37	74	60	82	0	253	-158
Opponents	53	133	119	106	0	411	

NFC	1	2	3	4	OT	TOT	DIFF
San Francisco	67	137	64	174	0	442	189
Opponents	59	77	53	64	0	253	
NY Giants	77	83	100	88	0	348	96
Opponents	55	66	38	93	0	252	
New Orleans	105	123	60	98	0	386	85
Opponents	27	96	89	86	3	301	
LA Rams	122	124	61	116	3	426	82
Opponents	50	87	83	122	2	344	
Washington	80	82	127	97	0	386	78
Opponents	76	99	47	86	0	308	
Minnesota	80	139	80	50	2	351	76
Opponents	54	47	55	113	6	275	
Philadelphia	61	91	84	106	0	342	68
Opponents	74	74	47	79	0	274	
Green Bay	71	74	89	125	3	362	6
Opponents	77	157	70	52	0	356	
Chicago	40	108	82	128	0	358	-19
Opponents	69	111	72	125	0	377	
Detroit	68	108	65	71	0	312	-52
Opponents	29	156	89	87	3	364	
Tampa Bay	58	92	42	128	0	320	-99
Opponents	79	144	86	110	0	419	
Phoenix	43	76	51	88	0	258	-119
Opponents	68	99	90	120	0	377	
Atlanta	43	100	85	51	0	279	-158
Opponents	97	118	123	99	0	437	
Dallas	47	70	35	52	0	204	-189
Opponents	84	118	90	101	0	393	

* — Ranked by scoring differential.

REVIEW

Dalton Hilliard scored three TDs for the Saints in their 40-21 win over the Rams. The Saints sacked **Jim Everett** five times and intercepted him twice.... In the Giants' 20-13 win over the Chargers, San Diego's **Vencie Glenn** set a record with an 81-yard fumble return for a TD.... FB **Earl Ferrell** had three rushing TDs in Phoenix's 34-20 win over the Falcons.... Minnesota's defense had eight sacks, intercepted two passes and recovered three fumbles in a 20-7 win over the Lions.... Oilers coach **Jerry Glanville** was on the sidelines for Houston's 27-0 win over the Steelers, despite the fact he'd been bitten on the foot by a water moccasin the previous day. Oilers QB **Warren Moon** threw three TD passes.... In Kansas City's 36-28 win over Dallas, **Christian Okoye** rushed for 170 yards, and **Nick Lowery**'s two FGs placed him 13th on the all-time list with 211. The Chiefs scored four rushing TDs for the first time since Dec. 12, 1976.... The 97-yard **Bernie Kosar-Webster Slaughter** TD play against Chicago was the longest in Cleveland history. The Browns won the game, 27-7.

WEEK EIGHT — Oct. 29

Chris Jacke, who missed a 50-yard FG on the final play of regulation, kicked a 38-yarder in OT to give Green Bay a 23-20 win over Detroit. Detroit's **Eddie Murray** botched a 34-yard FG attempt in the first half against the Packers, ending his streak of consecutive FGs at 19. Green Bay's **Don Majkowski** threw for a career-high 367 yards, his sixth career 300-yard game.... In Cleveland's 28-17 win over Houston, the Browns scored on two trick plays, an 80-yard **Bernie Kosar** fleaflicker pass to **Webster Slaughter** and a 32-yard halfback option pass from **Eric Metcalf** to **Reggie Langhorne**.... **Dan Marino**'s NFL-record sackless streak was stopped at 19 games when the Bills got to him twice and eventually won the game, 31-17. The Bills had two players rush for 100-plus yards for the first time since 1978. **Thurman Thomas** had 148 and **Larry Kinnebrew** 121.... When the Eagles defeated the Broncos, 28-24, it marked Denver's first home loss in nine games.... In Cincinnati's 56-23 win over Tampa Bay, **Boomer Esiason** tied his own club record for TD passes with five.... Dallas lost to Phoenix, 19-10, dropping to 0-8, the Cowboys' 19th defeat in 20 games.... Kansas City's **Nick Lowery** kicked a 50-yard FG against Pittsburgh, giving him 18 FGs of 50 yards or more — an NFL record. The Steelers won the game, 23-17.

WEEK NINE — Nov. 5

Minnesota PK **Rich Karlis** tied **Jim Bakken**'s 1967 record by kicking seven FGs in a 23-21 win over the Rams. The Vikings won the game after Minnesota's **Mike Merriweather** blocked **Dale Hatcher**'s punt out of the end zone for a safety. It was the first OT game ever decided by a safety.... Atlanta defeated Buffalo, 30-28, on a 50-yard FG by **Paul McFadden** with two seconds to play. The game had three lead changes in the final 1:22.... The Jets, who had scored only one offensive TD in five previous games, scored three and defeated the Patriots, 27-26, as **Ken O'Brien** threw for 386 yards.... Kansas City completed its first season sweep of the Seahawks since 1981, winning 20-10 as **Christian Okoye** ran for 126 yards.... **Bo Jackson** broke a Raiders record by running 92 yards for a TD in a 28-7 victory over the Bengals. The old mark of 91 was set by Jackson in a 1987 game against the Seahawks. Jackson thus became the first player in NFL history to have two 90-yard TD runs.... Dallas, 0-8 going in, won its first game of '89, beating the Redskins, 13-3. **Roger Ruzek** put the game

REVIEW

away with his second FG, a 43-yarder with 4:05 left.... Indianapolis' **Eric Dickerson**, nursing a sore hamstring, missed his first start due to injury in seven seasons. Without him, the Colts lost to the Dolphins, 19-13.... The Bucs held Cleveland WR **Webster Slaughter** to one catch for 15 yards, halting his string of 100-yard games at three. The Browns still won the game, 42-31.

WEEK 10 — Nov. 12

PK **Pete Stoyanovich** kicked a 59-yard FG, third-longest in NFL history, in Miami's 31-23 win over the Jets. The only longer FGs were by New Orleans' **Tom Dempsey**, who kicked a 63-yarder against Detroit in 1970, and Cleveland's **Steve Cox**, who hit from 60 yards in 1984 against Cincinnati.... The Rams' **Jim Everett** completed 18 consecutive passes in a 31-10 win against the Giants as LA ended a four-game losing streak.... Atlanta QB **Chris Miller**, called on to kick when PK **Paul McFadden** was injured in pre-game warmups, hit a 25-yard FG against the 49ers. Miller had never attempted a FG in the NFL. San Francisco won the game, 45-3, as WR **Jerry Rice** surpassed the 1,000-yard plateau for the fourth consecutive season. He had three catches for 81 yards, giving him 1,043.... **Kevin Butler** of the Bears kicked two FGs, coming within one of tying **Mark Moseley**'s 1981-82 record of 23 consecutive successful kicks, as Chicago beat Pittsburgh, 20-0.... Dallas' **Troy Aikman** passed for 379 yards in a 24-20 loss to Phoenix.... In a 17-7 loss to the Browns, Seattle WR **Steve Largent** became the first player in NFL history to catch 800 passes in a career.

WEEK 11 — Nov. 19

Bears PK **Kevin Butler** made his 23rd consecutive FG, tying **Mark Moseley**'s 1981-82 NFL record, in a 32-31 loss to Tampa Bay.... The Miami-Dallas game was stopped 14 times for instant-replay reviews. The Dolphins prevailed, 17-14.... The 49ers' **Joe Montana** threw for 325 yards in a 21-17 loss to the Packers. He also threw his first interception in 150 attempts.... The Vikings lost, 10-9, to Philadelphia despite **Herschel Walker**'s 93-yard TD kickoff return. It was Walker's third long-distance play against the Eagles. In 1986, Walker burned Philadelphia on an 84-yard TD pass reception and an 84-yard TD run — in the same game.... The Lions, leading the league in turnovers, lost three fumbles, were intercepted twice and had a punt blocked in their 42-7 loss to the Bengals.

WEEK 12 — Nov. 26

John Elway threw four TD passes as Denver defeated the Seahawks, 41-14, to clinch its fourth divisional title of the decade. The Broncos (10-2) joined the 1988 Bills as the only AFC teams to clinch division titles after just 12 games of a 16-game season. It was Denver's fourth straight win and Seattle's fourth consecutive loss. Seattle's **Steve Largent** tied **Don Hutson**'s record for career TD catches when he grabbed his 99th, a 31-yarder, in the fourth quarter.... **Willie "Flipper" Anderson** set an NFL record for single-game receiving with 336 yards (15 catches) as the Rams defeated New Orleans, 20-17. The previous record was 309 yards, set by Kansas City's **Stephone Paige** in 1985.... **Don Majkowski** threw two TD passes to **Sterling Sharpe** as the Packers defeated the Vikings 20-19. Majkowski completed his first 14. CB **Dave Brown**, the NFL's active interception leader, picked off two passes, his 58th and 59th, inside the final four minutes to preserve the victory.... **Johnny Hector** ran for two TDs as the Jets defeated Atlanta, 27-17, their first win at home in 1989.... **Mark Rypien**

(continued on page 124)

1989 TEAM STATISTICS

AFC

OFFENSE	BUF	CIN	CLE	DEN	HOU	IND	KC	LA	MIA	NE	NY	PIT	SD	SEA
First Downs	334	348	285	308	327	273	304	259	310	335	292	244	267	290
Avg. Rush	4.3	4.7	3.6	3.8	3.9	4.0	4.0	4.5	3.3	3.6	4.0	3.6	4.3	3.4
Rushing Yards/Game	141.5	155.2	100.6	130.8	120.5	115.8	139.2	127.4	83.1	109.3	99.8	113.6	117.1	87.0
Passes Attempted	478	513	529	474	496	493	435	414	601	610	570	404	515	559
Completed	281	288	309	256	295	253	259	201	331	302	338	210	270	316
Pct. Completed	58.8	56.1	58.4	54.0	59.5	51.3	59.5	48.6	55.1	49.5	59.3	52.0	52.4	56.5
Times Sacked	35	41	34	43	37	28	23	44	10	34	62	51	39	46
Passing Yards/Game	224.3	226.1	214.6	187.6	218.7	185.0	189.9	184.4	263.5	231.7	213.4	136.1	189.9	200.3
Total Yards/Game	365.8	381.3	315.1	318.3	339.2	300.8	329.1	311.8	346.6	341.0	313.2	249.8	306.9	287.3
Third-Down Efficiency	42.4	45.5	38.5	46.3	40.9	34.1	42.3	34.0	48.3	38.3	32.4	31.6	36.3	40.3
Had Intercepted	20	13	15	20	16	17	23	22	25	27	24	13	19	23
Avg. Yards per Punt	38.3	38.5	39.4	39.8	41.8	42.4	40.1	40.5	41.7	37.4	39.4	40.6	39.5	39.4
Avg. Punt Return	9.1	5.8	10.1	7.6	6.4	12.4	7.5	9.5	10.2	8.4	9.1	7.0	7.2	8.4
Avg. Kickoff Return	20.0	17.4	18.6	20.4	17.4	19.4	17.6	18.6	18.9	21.2	17.5	23.3	19.3	19.2
Fumbles/Lost	30/21	29/19	23/15	26/12	39/17	33/10	32/18	28/12	30/16	26/12	32/17	32/18	24/17	43/14
Penalties	103	85	128	83	149	89	116	132	83	63	116	116	122	79
Total Points Scored	409	404	334	362	365	298	318	315	331	297	253	265	266	241
Total TDs	49	52	41	40	41	34	35	35	39	30	30	29	31	26
Field Goals Made/Attempted	23/30	14/20	16/24	27/33	25/37	21/27	24/33	23/34	19/26	30/40	14/21	21/30	17/25	15/25
DEFENSE														
First Downs	299	280	276	246	314	336	252	308	337	297	328	323	295	293
Avg. Rush	3.8	4.5	3.7	3.7	3.8	4.1	4.0	3.8	4.4	4.0	4.1	4.0	3.8	4.1
Rushing Yards/Game	115.0	135.1	104.4	98.8	104.3	129.8	110.4	121.3	134.6	123.6	133.5	125.5	113.3	132.4
Passes Attempted	508	482	540	504	467	556	471	506	513	449	514	548	513	445
Completed	255	256	269	268	269	322	236	277	315	259	282	290	283	252
Pct. Completed	50.2	53.1	49.8	53.2	57.6	57.9	50.1	54.7	61.4	57.7	54.9	52.9	55.2	56.6
Times Sacked	38	33	45	47	36	46	36	35	39	31	28	31	48	32
Passing Yards/Game	200.4	195.9	197.6	176.7	221.4	220.9	157.9	191.4	221.4	229.1	241.1	221.3	184.4	193.6
Total Yards/Game	315.4	331.1	301.9	275.4	325.7	350.7	268.3	312.7	356.0	352.8	374.6	346.8	297.8	325.9
Third-Down Efficiency	35.2	39.2	35.7	33.8	45.5	43.2	38.4	47.6	34.5	36.2	38.5	46.3	35.7	41.8
Intercepted by	23	21	27	21	21	21	15	18	15	16	15	21	25	9
Avg. Yards per Punt	38.3	39.1	40.4	41.0	37.6	41.6	39.1	40.3	39.0	42.1	39.8	40.5	38.6	39.2
Avg. Punt Return	9.1	9.8	8.5	13.2	8.0	10.9	8.1	7.3	9.8	9.1	7.6	8.0	10.5	8.1
Avg. Kickoff Return	15.8	21.9	20.3	17.4	17.4	19.2	21.0	17.0	19.3	19.7	21.9	20.7	21.9	18.5
Fumbles/Lost	31/13	26/16	32/11	43/22	25/16	34/15	32/18	40/18	19/8	22/12	32/9	40/21	21/13	26/13
Penalties	87	122	122	102	109	103	102	105	106	111	90	96	93	118
Total Points Scored	317	285	254	226	412	301	286	297	379	391	411	326	290	327
Total TDs	34	32	30	25	52	29	32	36	43	48	50	38	29	37
Field Goals Made/Attempted	26/37	20/27	15/28	17/27	17/21	32/43	21/26	15/21	25/33	19/26	21/31	19/27	29/41	22/32

NFC

OFFENSE	ATL	CHI	DAL	DET	GB	LA	MIN	NO	NY	PHL	PHX	SF	TB	WAS
First Downs	261	302	246	274	342	321	326	304	298	321	262	350	288	338
Avg. Rush	3.6	4.4	4.0	4.9	4.4	4.0	4.0	3.9	3.4	4.1	3.3	4.0	3.7	3.7
Rushing Yards/Game	72.2	142.9	88.1	128.3	108.3	119.3	129.1	121.8	118.1	138.0	85.1	122.9	94.2	119.0
Passes Attempted	578	484	513	450	600	523	499	461	444	538	523	483	570	581
Completed	312	267	266	229	354	308	272	284	248	294	279	339	302	337
Pct. Completed	54.0	55.2	51.9	50.9	59.0	58.9	54.5	61.6	55.9	54.6	53.3	70.2	53.0	58.0
Times Sacked	51	28	30	57	48	32	40	36	46	45	56	45	43	21
Passing Yards/Game	219.6	193.0	180.3	183.7	253.0	258.3	199.3	211.3	192.1	194.5	205.0	268.9	208.4	271.8
Total Yards/Game	291.8	335.9	268.4	312.0	361.3	377.6	328.4	333.0	310.2	332.5	290.1	391.8	302.6	390.8
Third-Down Efficiency	32.5	43.9	33.2	33.3	45.6	40.5	34.0	43.0	44.0	39.4	39.5	42.1	41.3	43.8
Had Intercepted	12	25	27	24	20	18	19	19	16	16	30	11	28	17
Avg. Yards per Punt	40.8	39.5	39.8	42.6	40.6	38.3	39.8	39.1	43.1	39.0	43.6	39.8	38.5	42.3
Avg. Punt Return	10.7	6.9	6.4	12.2	8.3	9.5	10.0	8.1	12.7	8.9	11.7	11.0	9.3	8.7
Avg. Kickoff Return	18.9	21.1	22.2	20.9	18.0	19.8	22.0	20.4	18.2	16.9	19.9	18.7	17.0	20.3
Fumbles/Lost	26/11	23/17	29/15	37/24	35/13	26/11	28/14	28/12	30/14	43/16	24/14	32/14	21/9	32/20
Penalties	82	95	100	121	81	102	119	90	83	114	113	109	104	105
Total Points Scored	279	358	204	312	362	426	351	386	346	342	258	442	320	386
Total TDs	30	45	25	36	42	51	36	46	37	40	29	51	36	42
Field Goals Made/Attempted	23/32	15/19	10/20	20/21	22/28	23/30	32/44	20/29	29/38	20/33	18/26	29/36	22/28	29/40
DEFENSE														
First Downs	336	332	321	314	307	306	266	293	266	281	329	283	317	274
Avg. Rush	4.3	4.3	3.7	3.6	4.4	3.8	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.8	4.3	3.7	4.2	3.5
Rushing Yards/Game	154.4	118.6	124.4	101.3	125.5	96.4	105.2	82.9	96.2	100.3	143.9	86.4	126.4	84.0
Passes Attempted	437	554	488	570	476	577	488	577	486	529	531	564	515	530
Completed	259	307	301	370	302	345	252	320	273	258	286	316	301	277
Pct. Completed	59.3	55.4	61.7	64.9	63.4	59.8	51.6	55.5	56.2	48.8	53.9	56.0	58.4	52.3
Times Sacked	31	39	29	40	34	42	71	47	39	62	30	43	33	40
Passing Yards/Game	222.1	239.5	222.8	244.8	208.7	251.5	156.3	241.3	195.3	205.6	223.4	202.2	214.8	223.2
Total Yards/Game	376.6	358.1	347.3	346.1	334.2	347.9	261.5	324.1	291.5	305.9	367.3	288.6	341.3	307.2
Third-Down Efficiency	45.0	40.6	46.3	37.7	45.0	37.7	33.5	38.0	38.5	36.4	43.7	36.2	41.8	38.1
Intercepted by	20	26	7	16	25	21	18	21	22	30	16	21	21	27
Avg. Yards per Punt	41.8	39.6	39.9	41.2	40.7	41.5	40.6	39.4	40.1	42.0	41.5	38.9	40.3	40.1
Avg. Punt Return	10.7	8.7	8.8	8.1	13.9	9.3	9.4	7.0	8.1	5.8	8.1	10.3	9.1	11.3
Avg. Kickoff Return	19.8	20.2	18.5	16.0	22.0	19.4	18.9	17.9	17.9	21.8	20.9	18.9	20.8	20.7
Fumbles/Lost	26/12	24/12	22/10	28/16	28/15	38/15	29/18	35/18	38/15	44/26	18/11	34/16	30/18	24/15
Penalties	79	94	102	107	105	93	116	105	109	118	106	75	109	98
Total Points Scored	437	377	393	364	356	344	275	301	252	274	377	253	419	308
Total TDs	49	43	44	42	41	38	34	35	30	33	41	26	51	38
Field Goals Made/Attempted	31/36	26/36	28/35	23/33	23/30	26/29	13/21	19/24	14/21	14/26	29/40	23/31	20/24	14/23

NFL Team Rankings By Yards

TEAM	OFFENSE TOTAL	OFFENSE RUSH	OFFENSE PASS	DEFENSE TOTAL	DEFENSE RUSH	DEFENSE PASS
Atlanta	24	28	9	28	28	19
Buffalo	5	3	8	11	14	10
Chicago	10	2	19	25	15	24
Cincinnati	3	1	7	15	26	8
Cleveland	16	21	11	7	10	9
Dallas	27	24	27	20	18	20
Denver	15	6	23	3	6	3
Detroit	18	8	26	18	8	27
Green Bay	6	20	5	16	19T	13
Houston	9	12	10	13	9	17
Indianapolis	23	17	24	22	22	15
Kansas City	13	4	21	2	12	2
Los Angeles Raiders	19	9	25	10	16	5
Los Angeles Rams	4	13	4	21	5	28
Miami	7	27	3	24	25	18
Minnesota	14	7	17	1	11	1
New England	8	19	6	23	17	23
New Orleans	11	11	13	12	1	26
New York Giants	20	15	20	5	4	7
New York Jets	17	22	12	27	24	25
Philadelphia	12	5	18	8	7	12
Phoenix	25	26	15	26	27	22
Pittsburgh	28	18	28	19	19T	16
San Diego	21	16	22	6	13	4
San Francisco	1	10	2	4	3	11
Seattle	26	25	16	14	23	6
Tampa Bay	22	23	14	17	21	14
Washington	2	14	1	9	2	21

T — Tied for position

Takeaways/Giveaways

AFC	TAKEAWAYS INT	TAKEAWAYS FUM	TAKEAWAYS TOT	GIVEAWAYS INT	GIVEAWAYS FUM	GIVEAWAYS TOT	NET DIFF
Denver	21	22	43	20	12	32	11
Pittsburgh	21	21	42	13	18	31	11
Indianapolis	21	15	36	17	10	27	9
Cleveland	27	11	38	15	15	30	8
Cincinnati	21	16	37	13	19	32	5
Houston	21	16	37	16	17	33	4
Los Angeles Raiders	18	18	36	22	12	34	2
San Diego	25	13	38	19	17	36	2
Buffalo	23	13	36	20	21	41	-5
Kansas City	15	18	33	23	18	41	-8
New England	16	12	28	27	12	39	-11
Seattle	9	13	22	23	14	37	-15
New York Jets	15	9	24	24	17	41	-17
Miami	15	8	23	25	16	41	-18

NFC	TAKEAWAYS INT	TAKEAWAYS FUM	TAKEAWAYS TOT	GIVEAWAYS INT	GIVEAWAYS FUM	GIVEAWAYS TOT	NET DIFF
Philadelphia	30	26	56	16	16	32	24
San Francisco	21	16	37	11	14	25	12
Atlanta	20	12	32	12	11	23	9
New Orleans	21	18	39	19	12	31	8
New York Giants	22	15	37	16	14	30	7
Green Bay	25	15	40	20	13	33	7
Los Angeles Rams	21	15	36	18	11	29	7
Washington	27	15	42	17	20	37	5
Minnesota	18	18	36	19	14	33	3
Tampa Bay	21	18	39	28	9	37	2
Chicago	26	12	38	25	17	42	-4
Detroit	16	16	32	24	24	48	-16
Phoenix	16	11	27	30	14	44	-17
Dallas	7	10	17	27	15	42	-25

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1989 INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

(16 Games)

AFC LEADERS

PASSING

	ATT	COMP	PCT COMP	YDS	AVG GAIN	TD	LONG	INT	SACK	YDS LOST	RATING POINTS
Esiason, Cin.	455	258	56.7	3525	7.75	28	t74	11	36	288	92.1
Moon, Hou.	464	280	60.3	3631	7.83	23	55	14	35	267	88.9
Kelly, Buff.	391	228	58.3	3130	8.01	25	t78	18	30	216	86.2
Kosar, Clev.	513	303	59.1	3533	6.89	18	t97	14	34	192	80.3
Marino, Mia.	550	308	56.0	3997	7.27	24	t78	22	10	86	76.9
DeBerg, KC	324	196	60.5	2529	7.81	11	50	16	14	111	75.8
Krieg, Sea.	499	286	57.3	3309	6.63	21	t60	20	37	289	74.8
O'Brien, NY	477	288	60.4	3346	7.01	12	57	18	50	391	74.3
Elway, Den.	416	223	53.6	3051	7.33	18	69	18	35	298	73.7
McMahon, SD	318	176	55.3	2132	6.70	10	t69	10	28	167	73.5
Brister, Pitt.	342	187	54.7	2365	6.92	9	t79	10	45	452	73.1
Trudeau, Ind.	362	190	52.5	2317	6.40	15	71	13	20	125	71.3
Grogan, NE	261	133	51.0	1697	6.50	9	t55	14	8	64	60.8

RUSHING

	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Okoye, KC	370	1480	4.0	59	12
Dickerson, Ind.	314	1311	4.2	t21	7
Thomas, Buff.	298	1244	4.2	38	6
Brooks, Cin.	221	1239	5.6	t65	7
Humphrey, Den.	294	1151	3.9	40	7
Jackson, LA	173	950	5.5	t92	4
Stephens, NE	244	833	3.4	t35	7
Worley, Pitt.	195	770	3.9	38	5
Hector, NY	177	702	4.0	24	3
Butts, SD	170	683	4.0	t50	9
Smith, Mia.	200	659	3.3	25	6
Metcalf, Clev.	187	633	3.4	t43	6
Warner, Sea.	194	631	3.3	34	3
Hoge, Pitt.	186	621	3.3	31	8
Perryman, NE	150	562	3.7	18	2
Kinnebrew, Buff.	131	533	4.1	25	6
Highsmith, Hou.	128	531	4.1	25	4
Spencer, SD	134	521	3.9	15	3
Williams, Sea.	146	499	3.4	21	1
Smith, LA	117	471	4.0	21	1
Pinkett, Hou.	94	449	4.8	60	1
Vick, NY	112	434	3.9	t39	5
Ball, Cin.	98	391	4.0	27	3
McNeil, NY	80	352	4.4	t19	2
Winder, Den.	110	351	3.2	16	2
White, Hou.	104	349	3.4	33	5
Nelson, SD	67	321	4.8	28	0
Rozier, Hou.	88	301	3.4	17	2
Bentley, Ind.	75	299	4.0	22	1

RECEIVING

	NO	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Reed, Buff.	88	1312	14.9	t78	9
Blades, Sea.	77	1063	13.8	t60	5
Johnson, Den.	76	1095	14.4	69	7
Williams, Sea.	76	657	8.6	t51	6
Miller, SD	75	1252	16.7	t69	10
Hill, Hou.	66	938	14.2	50	8
Slaughter, Clev.	65	1236	19.0	t97	6
McGee, Cin.	65	1211	18.6	t74	8
Clayton, Mia.	64	1011	15.8	t78	9
Brooks, Ind.	63	919	14.6	t55	4
Toon, NY	63	693	11.0	t37	2
Jensen, Mia.	61	557	9.1	20	6
Langhorne, Clev.	60	749	12.5	t62	2
Thomas, Buff.	60	669	11.2	t74	6
Fernandez, LA	57	1069	18.8	t75	9
Givens, Hou.	55	794	14.4	48	3
Sievers, NE	54	615	11.4	46	0
Metcalf, Clev.	54	397	7.4	t68	4
Rison, Ind.	52	820	15.8	61	4
Brown, Cin.	52	814	15.7	46	6
Bentley, Ind.	52	525	10.1	61	3

PUNTING

	NO	YDS	LONG	AVG	IN 20	NET AVG
Montgomery, Hou.	56	2422	63	43.3	15	36.1
Stark, Ind.	79	3392	64	42.9	14	32.9
Roby, Mia.	58	2458	58	42.4	18	35.3
Newsome, Pitt.	82	3368	57	41.1	15	34.1
Gossett, LA	67	2711	60	40.5	12	33.9
Horan, Den.	77	3111	63	40.4	24	34.3
Goodburn, KC	67	2688	54	40.1	25	33.8
Ilesic, SD	76	3049	64	40.1	11	32.9
Johnson, Cin.	61	2448	62	40.1	14	30.2
Rodriguez, Sea.	75	2995	59	39.9	17	32.9
Kidd, Buff.	65	2564	60	39.4	15	32.2
Prokop, NY	87	3426	76	39.4	29	35.5
Wagner, Clev.	97	3817	60	39.4	32	33.8
Feagles, NE	63	2392	64	38.0	13	31.3

PUNT RETURNS

	NO	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Verdin, Ind.	23	296	12.9	t49	1
McNeil, Clev.	49	496	10.1	49	0
Townsell, NY	33	299	9.1	30	0
Sutton, GB/Buff.	31	273	8.8	26	0
Woodson, Pitt.	29	207	7.1	20	0
Bell, Den.	21	143	6.8	24	0

KICKOFF RETURNS

	NO	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Woodson, Pitt.	36	982	27.3	t84	1
Logan, Mia.	24	613	25.5	t97	1
Miller, SD	21	533	25.4	t91	1
Martin, NE	24	584	24.3	38	0
Jefferson, Sea.	22	511	23.2	t97	1
Metcalf, Clev.	31	718	23.2	49	0
Jennings, Cin.	26	525	20.2	33	0
Bell, Den.	30	602	20.1	33	0
Adams, LA	22	425	19.3	37	0
Townsell, NY	34	653	19.2	69	0

SCORING-TOUCHDOWNS

	TD	RUSH	REC	RET	PTS
Okoye, KC	12	12	0	0	72
Thomas, Buff.	12	6	6	0	72
Miller, SD	11	0	10	1	66
Metcalf, Clev.	10	6	4	0	60
Brooks, Cin.	9	7	2	0	54
Butts, SD	9	9	0	0	54
Clayton, Mia.	9	0	9	0	54
Fernandez, LA	9	0	9	0	54
Holman, Cin.	9	0	9	0	54
Reed, Buff.	9	0	9	0	54
Dickerson, Ind.	8	7	1	0	48
Hill, Hou.	8	0	8	0	48
Hoge, Pitt.	8	8	0	0	48
Humphrey, Den.	8	7	1	0	48
McGee, Cin.	8	0	8	0	48
Johnson, Den.	7	0	7	0	42
Stephens, NE	7	7	0	0	42
Vick, NY	7	5	2	0	42
Williams, Sea.	7	1	6	0	42

SCORING-KICKING

	XP	XPA	FG	FGA	LONG	PTS
Treadwell, Den.	39	40	27	33	46	120
Norwood, Buff.	46	47	23	30	48	115
Zendejas, Hou.	40	40	25	37	52	115
Lowery, KC	34	35	24	33	50	106
Jaeger, LA	34	34	23	34	50	103
Stoyanovich, Mia.	38	39	19	26	59	95
Biasucci, Ind.	31	32	21	27	55	94
Anderson, Pitt.	28	28	21	30	49	91
Bahr, Clev.	40	40	16	24	50	88
Bahr, SD	29	30	17	25	53	80
Breech, Cin.	37	38	12	14	38	73
Johnson, Sea.	27	27	15	25	50	72
Leahy, NY	29	30	14	21	46	71
Staurovsky, NE	14	14	14	17	50	56
Gallery, Cin.	13	13	2	6	47	19

INTERCEPTIONS

	NO	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Wright, Clev.	9	91	10.1	t27	1
Fulcher, Cin.	8	87	10.9	22	0
Taylor, Ind.	7	225	32.1	t80	1
Byrd, SD	7	38	5.4	22	0
McMillan, NY	6	180	30.0	t92	1
Braxton, Den.	6	103	17.2	t34	1
Kelso, Buff.	6	101	16.8	43	0
Prior, Ind.	6	88	14.7	t58	1

SACKS

Williams, SD	14.0
Smith, Buff.	13.0
O'Neal, SD	12.5
Fletcher, Den.	12.0
Porter, Sea.	10.5
Townsend, LA	10.5
Cross, Mia.	10.0
Grossman, SD	10.0
Thomas, KC	10.0
Hand, Ind.	10.0

FUMBLES

Krieg, Sea.	18*
Moon, Hou.	11
Dickerson, Ind.	10
Trudeau, Ind.	10
O'Brien, NY	10
Worley, Pitt.	9
Brooks, Cin.	9
Elway, Den.	9
Esiason, Cin.	8
Okoye, KC	8
Marino, Mia.	7
Thomas, Buff.	7
Warner, Sea.	7
Smith, Mia.	6
Kelly, Buff.	6
Highsmith, Hou.	6
Beuerlein, LA	6
Schroeder, LA	6
Bell, Den.	5
Metcalf, Clev.	5
Humphery, NY	4
DeBerg, KC	4
Brister, Pitt.	4
Rozier, Hou.	4
Tolliver, SD	4
Humphrey, Den.	4
Johnson, Hou.	4
Reed, Buff.	4
Stradford, Mia.	4
Vick, NY	4

*NFL record t = touchdown

NFC LEADERS

PASSING

	ATT	COMP	PCT COMP	YDS	AVG GAIN	TD	LONG	INT	SACK	YDS LOST	RATING POINTS
Montana, SF	386	271	70.2	3521	9.12	26	t95	8	33	198	112.4
Everett, LA	518	304	58.7	4310	8.32	29	t78	17	29	214	90.6
Rypien, Wash.	476	280	58.8	3768	7.92	22	t80	13	16	108	88.1
Hebert, NO	353	222	62.9	2686	7.61	15	t54	15	22	171	82.7
Majkowski, GB	599	353	58.9	4318	7.21	27	t79	20	47	268	82.3
Simms, NY	405	228	56.3	3061	7.56	14	t62	14	40	244	77.6
Miller, Atl.	526	280	53.2	3459	6.58	16	t72	10	41	318	76.1
Cunningham, Phil.	532	290	54.5	3400	6.39	21	t66	15	45	343	75.5
Wilson, Minn.	362	194	53.6	2543	7.02	9	50	12	27	194	70.5
Hogeboom, Phoe.	364	204	56.0	2591	7.12	14	t59	19	40	266	69.5
Testaverde, TB	480	258	53.8	3133	6.53	20	t78	22	38	294	68.9
Tomczak, Chi.	306	156	51.0	2058	6.73	16	t79	16	10	68	68.2
Gagliano, Det.	232	117	50.4	1671	7.20	6	t75	12	25	153	61.2
Aikman, Dall.	293	155	52.9	1749	5.97	9	t75	18	19	155	55.7

RUSHING

	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Sanders, Det.	280	1470	5.3	34	14
Anderson, Chi.	274	1275	4.7	73	11
Hilliard, NO	344	1262	3.7	40	13
Bell, LA	272	1137	4.2	47	15
Craig, SF	271	1054	3.9	27	6
Anderson, NY	325	1023	3.1	t36	14
Walker, Dall./Minn.	250	915	3.7	47	7
Riggs, Wash.	201	834	4.1	58	4
Fullwood, GB	204	821	4.0	38	5
Settle, Atl.	179	689	3.8	20	3
Cunningham, Phil.	104	621	6.0	51	4
Tate, TB	167	589	3.5	48	8
Fenney, Minn.	151	588	3.9	25	4
Toney, Phil.	172	582	3.4	44	3
Byner, Wash.	134	580	4.3	24	7
Ferrell, Phoe.	149	502	3.4	t44	6
Byars, Phil.	133	452	3.4	t16	5
Palmer, Dall.	112	446	4.0	t63	2
Delpino, LA	78	368	4.7	t32	1
Majkowski, GB	75	358	4.8	20	5
Howard, TB	108	357	3.3	15	1
Morris, Wash.	124	336	2.7	t12	2
Muster, Chi.	82	327	4.0	20	5
Rathman, SF	79	305	3.9	13	1
Aikman, Dall.	38	302	7.9	25	0
Tillman, NY	79	290	3.7	19	0
Harbaugh, Chi.	45	276	6.1	t26	3
Woodside, GB	46	273	5.9	t68	1

RECEIVING

	NO	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Sharpe, GB	90	1423	15.8	t79	12
Carrier, TB	86	1422	16.5	t78	9
Monk, Wash.	86	1186	13.8	t60	8
Rice, SF	82	1483	18.1	t68	17
Sanders, Wash.	80	1138	14.2	68	4
Clark, Wash.	79	1229	15.6	t80	9
Rathman, SF	73	616	8.4	36	1
Ellard, LA	70	1382	19.7	53	8
Johnson, Det.	70	1091	15.6	t75	8
Martin, NO	68	1090	16.0	t53	8
Byars, Phil.	68	721	10.6	60	0
Carter, Minn.	65	1066	16.4	50	4
Jackson, Phil.	63	648	10.3	33	3
Smith, Phoe.	62	778	12.5	31	5
Taylor, SF	60	1077	18.0	t95	10
Woodside, GB	59	527	8.9	33	0
Collins, Atl.	58	862	14.9	47	3
Byner, Wash.	54	458	8.5	27	2
Hilliard, NO	52	514	9.9	t54	5
Holohan, LA	51	510	10.0	31	2

PUNTING

	NO	YDS	LONG	AVG	IN 20	NET AVG
Camarillo, Phoe.	76	3298	58	43.4	21	37.5
Arnold, Det.	82	3538	64	43.1	14	36.0
Landeta, NY	70	3019	71	43.1	19	37.8
Mojsiejenko, Wash.	62	2663	74	43.0	21	33.3
Fulhage, Atl.	84	3472	65	41.3	24	33.3
Saxon, Dall.	79	3233	56	40.9	19	34.3
Bracken, GB	66	2682	63	40.6	17	31.0
Helton, SF	55	2226	56	40.5	13	31.2
Scribner, Minn.	72	2864	55	39.8	16	33.4
Barnhardt, NO	55	2179	56	39.6	17	35.0
Buford, Chi.	72	2844	60	39.5	21	33.4
Mohr, TB	84	3311	58	39.4	10	32.1
Teltschik, Phil.	57	2246	58	39.4	12	35.3
Hatcher, LA	73	2834	54	38.8	15	32.1

PUNT RETURNS

	NO	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Stanley, Det.	36	496	13.8	74	0
Meggett, NY	46	582	12.7	t76	1
Sikahema, Phoe.	37	433	11.7	53	0
Taylor, SF	36	417	11.6	37	0
Drewrey, TB	20	220	11.0	55	0
Sanders, Atl.	28	307	11.0	t68	1
Lewis, Minn.	44	446	10.1	65	0
Howard, Wash.	21	200	9.5	38	0
Henley, LA	28	266	9.5	25	0

KICKOFF RETURNS

	NO	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Gray, Det.	24	640	26.7	57	0
Dixon, Dall.	47	1181	25.1	t97	1
Howard, Wash.	21	522	24.9	t99	1
Gentry, Chi.	28	667	23.8	63	0
Meggett, NY	27	577	21.4	43	0
Sanders, Chi.	23	491	21.3	t96	1
Johnson, Wash.	24	504	21.0	38	0
Sanders, Atl.	35	725	20.7	72	0
Brown, LA	47	968	20.6	74	0
Sikahema, Phoe.	43	874	20.3	52	0

SCORING-TOUCHDOWNS

	TD	RUSH	REC	RET	PTS
Hilliard, NO	18	13	5	0	108
Rice, SF	17	0	17	0	102
Anderson, Chi.	15	11	4	0	90
Bell, LA	15	15	0	0	90
Anderson, NY	14	14	0	0	84
Sanders, Det.	14	14	0	0	84
Sharpe, GB	13	0	12	1	78
Carter, Phil.	11	0	11	0	66
Taylor, SF	10	0	10	0	60
Walker, Dall./Minn.	10	7	2	1	60
Byner, Wash.	9	7	2	0	54
Carrier, TB	9	0	9	0	54
Clark, Wash.	9	0	9	0	54
Tate, TB	9	8	1	0	54
Ellard, LA	8	0	8	0	48
Johnson, Det.	8	0	8	0	48
Martin, NO	8	0	8	0	48
Monk, Wash.	8	0	8	0	48
Muster, Chi.	8	5	3	0	48
Craig, SF	7	6	1	0	42
Green, Phoe.	7	0	7	0	42

SCORING-KICKING

	XP	XPA	FG	FGA	LONG	PTS
Cofer, SF	49	51	29	36	47	136
Lohmiller, Wash.	41	41	29	40	48	128
Karlis, Minn.	27	28	31	39	51	120
Lansford, LA	51	51	23	30	48	120
Jacke, GB	42	42	22	28	52	108
Andersen, NO	44	45	20	29	49	104
Igwebuike, TB	33	35	22	28	53	99
Murray, Det.	36	36	20	21	50	96
Davis, NE/Atl.	25	28	23	34	52	94
Butler, Chi.	43	45	15	19	46	88
Allegre, NY	23	24	20	26	52	83
Del Greco, Phoe.	28	29	18	26	50	82
Zendejas, Phil./Dall.	33	33	14	24	47	75
Ruzek, Dall./Phil.	28	29	13	22	46	67
McFadden, Atl.	18	18	15	20	54	63
Nittmo, NY	12	13	9	12	39	39
DeLine, Phil.	3	3	3	7	49	12

INTERCEPTIONS

	NO	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Allen, Phil.	8	38	4.8	18	0
McDonald, Phoe.	7	170	24.3	t53	1
Holmes, Det.	6	77	12.8	36	1
Hamilton, TB	6	70	11.7	30	0
Waymer, NO	6	66	11.0	42	0
Gray, LA	6	48	8.0	t27	1
Robinson, TB	6	44	7.3	16	0
Brown, GB	6	12	2.0	12	0

SACKS

Doleman, Minn.	20.5
Harris, GB	19.5
Millard, Minn.	18.0
Greene, LA	16.5
Swilling, NO	16.5
Simmons, Phil.	15.5
Taylor, NY	15.0
Jeffcoat, Dall.	11.5
Noga, Minn.	11.5
White, Phil.	11.0
Brown, Phil.	10.5
Haley, SF	10.5
Holt, SF	10.5
Mann, Wash.	10.0
Marshall, NY	9.5
Warren, NO	9.5

FUMBLES

Cunningham, Phil.	17
Majkowski, GB	15
Rypien, Wash.	14
Miller, Atl.	13
Sanders, Det.	10
Montana, SF	9
Peete, Det.	9
Simms, NY	9
Meggett, NY	8
Bell, LA	7
Walker, Dall./Minn.	7
Hilliard, NO	7
Aikman, Dall.	6
Fullwood, GB	6
Anderson, Chi.	5
Flagler, SF	5
Hogeboom, Phoe.	5
Stanley, Det.	5
Wilson, Minn.	5

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1989

TO (PLAN) B

That was the question facing NFL
Their collective answers are
Is Plan B the great equalizer,

By John Clayton

On Nov. 16, 1988, a hand-delivered package arrived in the office of Gene Upshaw, executive director of the NFL Players Association. Inside the delivery was a pair of proposals, each designed to settle what was then 15 months of labor unrest. The first was "Plan A," a 10-year package of improved benefits, higher minimum salaries and updated figures on the NFL's long-time free-agency system. The other was "Plan B," rumored to be a time bomb, ticking away in Upshaw's office.

The NFLPA did not go with either of the proposals, claiming in court that its negotiations with the NFL were at an impasse. By that non-action, Plan B was detonated, sending shock waves throughout the league and thrusting all but 37 players from each roster into a state of free agency.

When the dust cleared, the varying degrees of Plan B participation were stark. Green Bay signed 20 new players in 1989, Kansas City 17, while Chicago and Cincinnati turned their noses up at the whole idea. In the final analysis, Chicago and Cincinnati fell from the playoff ranks while the Packers and Chiefs fattened their rosters and went from last place in 1988 to playoff contention in 1989.

"I think Plan B helps the lower-echelon teams," Chiefs president Carl Peterson said. "Obviously, we benefited last year. Green Bay did too. Plan B has its benefits and its drawbacks. For a team that is really down, it can act like a second draft of middle- to late-round choices.... But as a prescription for instant success or long-term success, especially for a team at the middle or highest echelons of the league, I don't think Plan B has any magic benefit."

Perhaps not, but seven of the 11 most active franchises in Plan B last year improved their records by an average of 1.6 victories. Eight of the dozen least-active clubs watched their triumphs drop a notch.

And yet this strange new talent source produced only 29 starters, and 14 weren't deemed valuable enough to protect one month after the regular season ended. Midway through the campaign, half of the original 229 Plan B adventurers were waived. During this year's signing period (Feb. 2 to April 1, 1990), 59 Plan B'ers were recycled through the same free-agency pool. Only 51 had been protected.

Maybe that's why the signings end on April Fools' Day. Club officials are wary that Plan B often permits them to chase only fool's gold at solid gold prices. "In my opinion, this Plan B system creates an artificial market," said Buffalo Bills general manager Bill Polian, one of the foremost Plan B bashers. "It can make a bad team medi-

1989 PLAN B SCORECARD

	TEAM	'88 W-L	'89 W-L	SIGNING BONUSES ($)	SIGNED						LOST	GRADE
					TOTAL	STARTERS	BACKUPS	INJURED	RELEASED	PROTECTED		
TAKING CHARGE	GREEN BAY	4-12	10-6	812,500	20	1	3	3	13	4	8	A
	KANSAS CITY	4-11-1	8-7-1	387,500	17	2	4	2	9	3	13	A
	DENVER	8-8	11-5	240,000	11	2	2	0	7	3	3	A-
	MINNESOTA	11-5	10-6	225,000	8	1	5	0	2	3	8	B+
	SAN DIEGO	6-10	6-10	400,000	11	3	4	1	3	4	5	B
	LA RAIDERS	7-9	8-8	172,500	11	3	1	2	5	4	6	B
	PHOENIX	7-9	5-11	657,000	11	1	4	3	3	4	9	B-
	WASHINGTON	7-9	10-6	790,000	15	0	4	4	7	4	12	B-
MORE SMOKE THAN FIRE	CLEVELAND	10-6	9-6-1	605,000	14	4	3	0	7	2	10	C+
	DETROIT	4-12	7-9	400,000	10	3	2	0	5	4	7	C
	MIAMI	6-10	8-8	450,000	11	2	1	1	7	2	6	C
GOING THROUGH THE MOTIONS	ATLANTA	5-11	3-13	205,000	10	2	2	0	6	0	15	C
	PITTSBURGH	5-11	9-7	122,500	8	1	2	1	4	1	3	C
	INDIANAPOLIS	9-7	8-8	410,000	7	0	3	0	4	1	7	D
SHREWD INVESTORS	SAN FRANCISCO	10-6	14-2	340,000	6	0	2	3	1	2	2	A-
	TAMPA BAY	5-11	5-11	257,500	5	1	3	0	2	3	8	B
	PHILADELPHIA	10-6	11-5	215,000	5	2	2	0	1	1	6	C+
	NY GIANTS	10-6	12-4	260,000	4	0	3	0	1	1	9	C
	BUFFALO	12-4	9-7	227,500	6	0	3	0	3	2	5	C
	NEW ENGLAND	9-7	5-11	*—	6	0	4	0	2	3	10	C
NO SHOWS	DALLAS	3-13	1-15	122,500	5	1	0	1	3	1	6	C-
	NY JETS	8-7-1	4-12	151,000	5	0	0	1	4	1	10	D-
	NEW ORLEANS	10-6	9-7	75,000	3	0	1	0	2	0	8	F
	LA RAMS	10-6	11-5	110,000	3	0	0	0	3	0	12	F
	SEATTLE	9-7	7-9	175,000	9	0	0	0	9	0	8	F
	HOUSTON	10-6	9-7	172,000	7	0	2	1	4	0	15	F
	CHICAGO	12-4	6-10	—	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	F
	CINCINNATI	12-4	8-8	—	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	F
*SIGNING BONUSES NOT DISCLOSED.				7,982,500	229	29	60	23	117	53	229	

OR NOT TO B?

teams in 1989, and again in 1990. begging yet another question: or a future trivia question?

ocre, and it can do the same to a good team. It erodes your depth, takes away your developmental players, and also plants some seeds of discord on your team."

On the other hand, Plan B can be considered the ultimate equalizer. "I think Plan B had a positive effect," said NFL Management Council executive director Jack Donlan. "Clubs whose performance is better on the field probably made available a better caliber player than the team not doing as well." In this way, lesser teams could ostensibly acquire the talent needed to catch up with the perennial league leaders.

What it has come down to, though, is that both 6-10 and 10-6 teams now have the chance to become 8-8. Clearly, it's a gamble many general managers have been willing to take. In only two years, Plan B has become the second-most significant offseason system of player acquisition since the NFL started drafting players 55 years ago. It has freed 1,109 players, ranging from bottom-of-the-roster types to one-time stars whose salaries, ages or injuries make them expendable. It has increased paychecks, in some cases as high as 400 to 500 percent, thereby trivializing the trade market.

To understand the rise of Plan B is to understand the current confused state of the NFL. Because of incessant labor problems, the commissioner's office is not the final arbiter of player disputes. The NFL answers to David Doty, a Minneapolis judge who just happened to draw the task of refereeing the aftermath of the NFLPA's failed strike in 1987.

"Commissioner" Doty ruled on antitrust grounds that negotiations were at an impasse and the NFL was allowed to operate under terms of the previous collective bargaining agreement until both sides returned to the table. Buried deep in his ruling, Doty suggested that players be granted some negotiating freedom to withstand further antitrust challenges until the labor wars subsided.

"The only reason Plan B exists is because the league needed it to satisfy what they felt was an adequate way to meet the rule of reason," said M.J. Duberstein, the NFLPA's research director. And now the freedom Doty called for is a system that frees bench-warmers, aging starters and career backups. Approximately 22 percent of first-year free agents were at least 30 years old. That percentage increased to 26 percent in 1990.

To further promote movement the NFL Management Council and the league, through Donlan, prohibited teams from bidding on their own unprotected players. As a result, 229 players jumped teams in 1989 (and this year 184 followed the same freedom trail). From a

1989 ANALYSIS

TAKING CHARGE

GREEN BAY

GRADE: A For a league-high $812,500 in signing bonuses to 20 players, the Packers gained one starter, 33-year-old center Blair Bush. Nevertheless, general manager Tom Braatz earned the title "King of Plan B." The experienced additions heightened training camp competition, and the Packers improved their record from 4-12 to 10-6. Seven of the 20 made the roster, and in 1990 the Packers protected four (Bush, halfback Michael Haddix and offensive linemen James Campen and Mike Ariey). Of the eight players lost, the Packers might have given up too early on Alphonso Carreker, a former first-round choice who found new life as a defensive end for the Broncos.

KANSAS CITY

GRADE: A Although the Packers made more of a Plan B splash, Chiefs president Carl Peterson got more bang for the buck. The Chiefs gained eight players, including starting center Mike Webster, starting inside linebacker Walker Lee Ashley and promising young nose tackle Dan Saleaumua, who received some Pro Bowl votes after replacing injured Bill Maas. Backup safety Danny Copeland also found his way onto the protected list. Of the 13 departures, none made any impact. The net gain in the standings was four victories to 8-7-1.

DENVER

GRADE: A- The Broncos made a few mistakes, like tight end Doug Cosbie, who pocketed his $30,000 signing bonus without practicing a down. And seven of 11 signings were busts. But the Broncos did find two defensive starters in defensive end Alphonso Carreker and cornerback Wymon Henderson. Michael Young, with 22 catches, filled the shoes of departed possession receiver Steve Watson. Plan B gave the Broncos a chance to unload aging backups. Three were lost. None came back to haunt them.

MINNESOTA

GRADE: B+ GM Mike Lynn batted .750, keeping six of eight signees. Backup defensive end Thomas Strauthers, linebacker Mark Dusbabek and cornerback Audrey McMillian were good enough to fit into this year's 37-man roster. The only starter gained, free safety Travis Curtis, was unprotected. Eight Vikings jumped ship, but the best of the group (cornerback Wymon Henderson, tight end Mike Mularkey, guard Terry Tausch, linebacker Walker Lee Ashley) couldn't have won starting jobs on this talented roster.

SAN DIEGO

GRADE: B Eight of 11 acquisitions made the team. Brett Miller and Joel Patten started on offense, while Lester Lyles helped in the secondary. Tackle Larry Williams, who spent the season on the injured list, might be the best player of the bunch and was the lone survivor of a purge by new GM Bobby Beathard. Ken Dallafior, a journeyman offensive lineman, was the only one of the five Plan B losses the Chargers might have regretted. He had a good year for the Detroit Lions and was one of the most heavily recruited Plan B linemen this year.

LA RAIDERS

GRADE: B The Raiders, clicking on four of 11, get high marks for two starters making instant impact on defense. Bob Golic had a great year at nose tackle, and while they might have made a mistake cutting linebacker Matt Millen, the younger (by three years) Thomas Benson filled in nicely. Last year, the Raiders protected only two linebackers. Of the five signed in Plan B, Benson was the only one worth keeping. Jeff Jaeger solved their kicking problems, and owner Al Davis thinks Sam Graddy is a speed receiver with some potential. Six unprotected Raiders departed with none successful.

PHOENIX

GRADE: B- The Cardinals made good use of Plan B, with eight of 11 signees surviving the cut. Quarterback Gary Hogeboom, halfback Lydell Carr, defensive lineman Gary Hadd and safety Mike Zordich were part of the 37-man roster. The Cardinals also rid themselves of high-priced, aging veterans such as linebacker E.J. Junior and defensive end Curtis Greer. The one mistake out of nine lost might have been guard Ray Brown, who went to the Redskins.

WASHINGTON

GRADE: B- Four for 15 is a bad figure. The Redskins spent $790,000 in signing bonuses, but found just four keepers, none of whom started. Defensive end Fred Stokes, who came with a $125,000 instant price tag, added quality depth on the defensive line. Cornerback Martin Mayhew showed promise, and guard Ray Brown has starting potential. Mike Tice, a veteran tight end, is a dependable backup with years of starting experience. Twelve unprotected Redskins left, but former GM Bobby Beathard made few mistakes, though departed free safety Travis Curtis started for the Minnesota Vikings.

MORE SMOKE THAN FIRE

CLEVELAND

GRADE: C+ In exchange for signing bonuses totaling $605,000, investing in 14 players, the Browns found two young defensive linemen in Tom Gibson and Robert Banks. With linemen at such a premium, the price might be a bargain. The Browns led the Plan B world by finding four starters (defensive linemen Al Baker and Banks, plus guard Ted Banker and punter Bryan Wagner). The Browns' gains, however, were offset by their losses. Nose tackle Bob Golic and kicker Jeff Jaeger were hits with the Los Angeles Raiders.

DETROIT

GRADE: C While the Lions eagerly joined the Plan B game, they were bad players. They made the biggest free-agency blunder, exposing three healthy defensive linemen (Thomas Strauthers, to Minnesota; Gary Hadd, to Phoenix; and Dan Saleaumua, to Kansas City). All three made their respective teams' protected lists. No franchise can afford to lose healthy defensive linemen. On the upside, half of the 10 signings made the Lions roster, including top-notch kick returner Mel Gray, wide receiver Robert Clark and starting linebackers Victor Jones and Toby Caston. Offensive lineman Ken Dallafior was another good find.

MIAMI

GRADE: C After 11 signings, coach Don Shula was helped by two veteran linebackers, Dave Ahrens and E.J. Junior. Marc Logan was a dependable kickoff returner, but didn't bolster the Dolphins' needs at running back. Other than that, Plan B offered little support. Of six lost Dolphins, only cornerback Reyna Thompson surfaced elsewhere, with the NY Giants.

GOING THROUGH THE MOTIONS

ATLANTA

GRADE: C The Falcons signed 10 players but passed out only $205,000 in signing bonuses. The best deals were Paul McFadden, who kicked well, and tight end Ron Heller, who caught 33 passes. New coach Jerry Glanville cleared out all remaining Plan B players when he prepared his protected list. The Falcons lost 15, with tackle Brett Miller the only major contributor elsewhere.

PITTSBURGH

GRADE: C The Steelers threw pennies into the Plan B pool, but their wish for a tight end was granted. Mike Mularkey, who suited up for a mere $20,000 signing bonus, did a fine job as a starter. Halfback Ray Wallace, linebacker Vinson Smith and wide receiver Jason Johnson didn't get much of a chance and were left unprotected. Mike Webster proved in Kansas City he could still contribute.

INDIANAPOLIS

GRADE: D GM Jimmy Irsay dabbled in the Plan B market, coming up with seven players. His only big gamble was defensive lineman Sam Clancy, who pocketed a $200,000 signing bonus. Ouch. Clancy didn't succeed, but was saved for another year. Two other backups, cornerback Bruce Plummer and center Stan Eisenhooth, weren't protected. Three of seven departed Colts ended up starting (tackle Joel Patten, San Diego; linebacker Barry Krauss, Cleveland; and quarterback Gary Hogeboom, Phoenix).

SHREWD INVESTORS

SAN FRANCISCO

GRADE: A- The 49ers knew what they were doing. They signed but six players, and only quarterback Kevin Sweeney didn't make it. Halfback Spencer Tillman was a big asset for special teams, and guard Terry Tausch and tight end Jamie Williams were valuable backups. Wide receiver Mike Sherrard recovered from his knee problems for the playoffs. The only Plan B losses were tight end Ron Heller and safety Greg Cox.

TAMPA BAY

GRADE: B Strong safety Sherman Cocroft started, and the special teams were aided by the additions of Willie Drewrey, Sylvester Stamps and snapper Sam Anno. The latter three were protected. The Bucs signed five, with the only waste a $75,000 signing bonus to defensive back Sidney Johnson, who was cut. The Bucs' unprotected list provided eight signings but no quality.

PHILADELPHIA

GRADE: C+ Coach Buddy Ryan signed five and four made it. Ryan knew what he wanted and didn't waste time. Linebacker Al Harris started, as did guard Mike Schad. Sammy Lilly and Mark Higgs were backups. The Eagles lost six, but none became starters.

NY GIANTS

GRADE: C GM George Young went 3 for 4, but defensive back Reyna Thompson was the only one making it to this year's 37-man protected list. Safety Greg Cox and offensive lineman Frank Winters didn't live up to their price tag of $175,000. Of the nine Giants lost, only kicker Paul McFadden found a starting role.

BUFFALO

GRADE: C Running back Ken Davis, who pocketed a $125,000 bonus, created good training camp competition. Offensive lineman Caesar Rentie, a $100,000 bonus baby, was a bust. They made up for that loss by signing two once-expensive Plan B players, linebacker Tim Cofield and cornerback Mickey Sutton, after they were cut by other teams. Both were protected. The Bills might have gained a dependable backup offensive lineman in John Davis. Management still is grumbling after being forced to expose promising cornerback Martin Mayhew, who signed with the Redskins. The Bills lost four others.

NEW ENGLAND

GRADE: C The Patriots invested wisely, picking up a veteran pass rusher (Gary Jeter), an experienced tight end (Eric Sievers) and a promising offensive lineman (Dave Viaene). They blew it, though, with their unprotected list, which cost them 10 players, including linebacker Thomas Benson and defensive end Tom Gibson. When preseason injuries hit, the Patriots lacked the depth they lost in Plan B. They also hid signing bonuses within salaries and roster bonuses.

NO SHOWS

DALLAS

GRADE: C- Free safety Ray Horton was well worth the $60,000 investment, but was only one of five signees to really contribute. With only six lost to Plan B, the weak Cowboys could call their first exposure a wash. Leaving wide receiver Mike Sherrard out there was a mistake.

NY JETS

GRADE: D- The Jets really went 0 for 5, though kick returner Mark Konecny made it to the injured list. Ten Jets signed elsewhere, which left the team shy on the offensive line. Ted Banker started for the Browns. Guard Ralph Tamm was a Redskins backup.

NEW ORLEANS

GRADE: F The Saints were hit hard. Eight left, and the departures killed their secondary depth. Of their three signings, only linebacker Walter Johnson made it as a backup.

LA RAMS

GRADE: F They wasted $110,000 on three failures who didn't survive training camp. Despite losing 12 Rams, coach John Robinson didn't leave himself too short, though he might have been able to use Gary Jeter as a pass-rushing defensive end. And Mickey Sutton could have helped as a backup cornerback.

SEATTLE

GRADE: F Front office turmoil contributed to mistakes in compiling the unprotected list. The Seahawks lost eight players, including both of their experienced tight ends and all backup offensive linemen. They figured local loyalties would keep two starters (tight end Mike Tice and center Blair Bush) home. They were wrong. Of the nine signings, only free safety Johnnie Johnson made the active roster, but his legs died after two weeks.

HOUSTON

GRADE: F No team suffered more than the Oilers. GM Ladd Herzeg, in his final move before quitting, left unprotected some of coach Jerry Glanville's favorite backups. As a result, 15 left. Glanville said seven of them became special teams captains or stars. A late scramble to sign seven new players failed to compensate for big losses. Only two survived and neither was protected.

CHICAGO

GRADE: F The Bears scoffed then slept through Plan B, suffering a net loss of nine, then watched their status as a playoff team fall.

CINCINNATI

GRADE: F Like the Bears, the Bengals might not have lost any major contributors, but they did lose valuable depth when nine unprotected players signed elsewhere.

movement standpoint, Plan B was a big hit. It afforded 40 percent of the players the opportunity to bargain, whether they liked it or not.

"That's still 37 players per team short of what it should be," agent Leigh Steinberg said. "Baseball, basketball, football and hockey have yet to accept that they are forms of entertainment. To cannibalize one another with this endless labor strife is ridiculous. Legally, they should let all players free."

Such freedom encourages free spending by the owners. "Every time we get ourselves in the position of bidding on players," said Dick Steinberg, general manager of the New York Jets, "we do stupid things." Poor decisions — and good decisions, for that matter — cost plenty, an expense that has filtered down into other areas of the game. For example, the average ticket price jumped from $20.10 in 1988 to $24.46 this season. In 1989, more than 75 percent of the franchises raised ticket prices, due in part to the financial burden Plan B added in the final year of the league's $17-million-a-year television contract.

The NFL needed every penny. Salaries in 1989 went through the roof. Duberstein said the average reached $302,400, a 25 percent increase from the previous year, the highest single-season increase since 1970 when the NFLPA started keeping such figures. It equaled the 25 percent salary hikes in 1983 and '84, when the NFL battled the United States Football League for players.

A costly class of draft choices accompanied by the new free-agency system was to blame for this latest and greatest contract inflation. Plan B signees received 60 percent raises. The ripple effect was 288 holdouts as salaries of unsigned protected players zoomed by 75 percent. Owners were forced to cough up a shade less than $8 million in Plan B signing bonuses. Said Duberstein: "Salaries rose at the highest rate in league history in a year where there was no appreciable revenue increase."

The NFL resembled a sinking boat trying to keep the pumps operating to avoid going under. To compensate for the estimated $22 million cost of Plan B in 1989, the NFL ceased severance payments and pension contributions. (Of course, the NFL stopped paying into the pension plan two years ago, maintaining it was overfunded because of stock market investment gains, and that decision is still being challenged by the National Labor Relations Board.) Jim Conway, assistant director of the Management Council, said these bailing operations were "almost a push" with first-year Plan B costs.

Sensing financial disaster, the league inaugurated other cost-cutting schemes, such as limiting training camps to 80 players and restricting injured reserve. With four fewer players per club, the NFL saved between $50 and $75 million. Despite savings, the Management Council reported that 16 of 28 teams ended up losing money last year. All this for a talent pool that produced only 29 starters.

"I saw 93 players who actually changed from Team A to Team B and made their roster on opening day," Chicago Bears vice president of player personnel Bill Tobin said. "Of those 93, 18 actually went in and won a starting job. They listed 40 or something like that. How do you list 40? You call a punter a starter, you call a return specialist a starter or your third-team wide receiver who starts after the first two games and gets hurt?"

Under the advice of Paul Tagliabue, the legal counsel who later became commissioner, the number of players who could be protected was cut down from 40-44 players to 37, thus freeing 619 players during the signing period. "I would say that the number was probably the point of equilibrium," said Conway. "Most football people we had talked to felt they could live with it comfortably without cutting into the bone."

Following 1989's Plan B venture, few realized its impact better than the league's newest twosome, owner Jerry Jones and head coach Jimmy Johnson, who aimed to turn around the waning Dallas Cowboys franchise. America's Team needed something, anything after a ho-hum 1989 draft — overestimating quarterback Steve Walsh's trade value, for example — and an even worse 1-15 record. Jones figured some form of free agency was in the league's future and wanted to take immediate and best advantage of the current system, one that exposed 619 players in 1989 and 490 this year.

"While we felt there might be some sort of free agency down the road, it is unlikely to include numbers involved in Plan B," Jones said. "'So this is Dallas' chance' is how I looked at it. Here we are rebuilding. Here we are at the bottom of the league. Here was our opportunity to basically look at a lot of players, involve them in our training camp, meld them into our system and make our team better."

While the Dallas duo recouped personnel, triggered by the mid-season trade of Herschel Walker to Minnesota for a passel of players and draft choices, they needed more transfusions. In January of 1990, the owner, the head coach and his aides studied the player availability list and sweated out their all-out assault on the K Mart of sports free agency. With good reason, too.

"We were worried the Cowboys might not be able to participate in Plan B," Jones said. "If the league made an agreement before bid-

1990 PLAN B

In February 1990, teams named 490 players to the NFL's Plan B free agency list. Two months later, by the April 1 deadline, 184 of those players signed with new teams. Here are those players, as well as a preseason evaluation of each team's participation — measuring quantity and quality — in the NFL's second season utilizing Plan B.

TAKING CHARGE

DALLAS

Signed 16 ($1,030,000 paid in total signing bonuses): Tommie Agee, FB, Kansas City; Rod Harris, WR, New Orleans; Greg Johnson, G, Miami; Walter Johnson, LB, New Orleans; Keith Jones, RB, Cleveland; James Washington, DB, LA Rams; Mike Williams, WR, Detroit; Terrence Cooks, LB, New England; Antonio Gibson, DB, New Orleans; Jay Novacek, TE, Phoenix; Tony Slaton, G, LA Rams; Vinson Smith, LB, Pittsburgh; Dennis McKinnon, WR, Chicago; Lybrant Robinson, DE, Washington; Anthony Spears, DE, Houston; Louis Cheek, T, Miami. **Lost 4:** Bob White, C, to New England; Bernard Ford, WR, to Houston; Paul Palmer, RB, to Cincinnati; Cornell Burbage, WR, to Minnesota.

By numbers alone, the 16 Plan B signings can do nothing but help this talent-deprived lineup. Assuring Jones a starting halfback job might be questionable, but the Cowboys got help at tight end (Novacek), wide receiver (McKinnon), safety (Gibson and Washington) and on the offensive line (Slaton, Johnson and Cheek). They threw away too much money, which doesn't bother owner Jerry Jones. He just hopes he spent it on the right players. **GRADE: A+**

GREEN BAY

Signed 13 ($730,000): William Harris, TE, Tampa Bay; Donnie Dee, TE, Seattle; Dale Hatcher, P, LA Rams; Paul Frazier, RB, New Orleans; Jerry Holmes, DB, Detroit; Aaron Chubb, LB, New England; George Yarno, C, Houston; James Cribbs, DE, Detroit; Flip Johnson, WR, Buffalo; Shawn Miller, DT, LA Rams; Greg Clark, LB, Miami; M.L. Johnson, LB, Seattle; Clarence Weathers, WR, Kansas City. **Lost 2:** Aubrey Matthews, WR, to Detroit; Ken Stills, DB, to Minnesota.

The Packers went for some younger prospects, signing Johnson and Frazier. But general manager Tom Braatz still couldn't resist signing veterans Yarno, Holmes and Miller. Losing only two players indicates that the Packers still lack depth. **GRADE: A**

SAN DIEGO

Signed 9 ($842,000): Bruce Plummer, DB, Indianapolis; Mark Rodenhauser, C, Minnesota; Joe Mickles, RB, Washington; Thomas Sanders, RB, Chicago; John Kidd, P, Buffalo; Ronnie Harmon, RB, Buffalo; Tom Toth, G, Miami; Mike Simmonds, G, Tampa Bay; John Carney, K, Tampa Bay. **Lost 7:** Brett Miller, T, to NY Jets; Joe Campbell, LB, to LA Raiders; Hank Ilesic, P, to LA Rams; Elliot Smith, DB, to Denver; Elvis Patterson, DB, to LA Raiders; Chris Gannon, DE, to New England; James FitzPatrick, T, to LA Raiders.

GM Bobby Beathard came into his job with the checkbook flashing. He bought a punter (Kidd) and two $550,000 running backs (Harmon and Sanders). Last year apparently proved to the Chargers that you can't rebuild an entire offensive line through Plan B, so Beathard only grabbed three in Simmonds, Toth and Rodenhauser. **GRADE: A**

WASHINGTON

Signed 12 ($1,150,000): James Wilder, RB, Tampa Bay; Brad Edwards, DB, Minnesota; Ron Middleton, TE, Cleveland; John Brandes, TE, Indianapolis; Walter Stanley, WR, Detroit; Mark Adickes, G, Kansas City; Tom Brown, RB, Miami; James Geathers, DE, New Orleans; Kevin McArthur, LB, NY Jets; Pat Swoopes, NT, New Orleans; Milford Hodge, DE, New England; Jeff Rutledge, QB, NY Giants. **Lost 6:** Jamie Morris, RB, to New England; Joe Mickles, RB, to San Diego; Lybrant Robinson, DE, to Dallas; Carl Harry, WR, to Houston; Ralph Tamm, G, to Cleveland; Herb Welch, DB, to Detroit.

The Redskins went for experience in Wilder, Adickes and Stanley. All three could help. Rutledge should back up Mark Rypien and Stan Humphries. Guess what? Owner Jack Kent Cooke quietly outspent Cowboys owner Jerry Jones. **GRADE: A**

DENVER

Signed 9 ($440,000): Mark Mraz, DE, LA Raiders; Chris Verhulst, TE, Houston; Elliot Smith, DB, San Diego; Jason Johnson, WR, Pittsburgh; Robb White, DE, NY Giants; Ty Allert, LB, Philadelphia; David Little, TE, Philadelphia; Rod Stephens, LB, Seattle; Lorenzo Hampton, RB, Miami. **Lost 4:** Mike Ruether, C, to Atlanta; Randy Thornton, DB, to NY Giants; Bruce Klosterman, LB, to LA Raiders; Pat Kelly, TE, to NY Jets.

The Broncos could put some of the Plan B acquisitions to work. Hampton fits into his role as halfback, and Verhulst could win a starting job at tight end. White and Mraz are developmental-type defensive linemen. **GRADE: B+**

NY JETS

Signed 12 ($717,500): Emanuel McNeil, DT, New England; Tom Rehder, T, New England; Brett Miller, T, San Diego; Glenn Antrum, WR, New England; Travis Curtis, DB, Minnesota; Mark Boyer, TE, Indianapolis; Trevor Matich, C, Detroit; Dave Zawatson, T, Chicago; Joe Kohlbrand, LB, New Orleans; Pat Kelly, TE, Denver; Anthony Parker, DB, Indianapolis; Patrick Egu, RB, New England. **Lost 9:** Leander Knight, DB, to Houston; Greg Werner, TE, to Philadelphia; Adam Schreiber, C, to Minnesota; Billy Griggs, TE, to Pittsburgh; Adam Bob, LB, to Tampa Bay; Ken Rose, LB, to Cleveland; Kevin McArthur, LB, to Washington; Stevon Moore, DB, to Miami; Kerry Glenn, DB, to Miami.

GM Dick Steinberg hopes to take advantage of past mistakes. He took four young New England Patriots prospects (Rehder, McNeil, Antrum and Egu) and also targeted the club's major weakness by signing four offensive linemen (Rehder, Zawatson, Matich and Miller). **GRADE: B**

CLEVELAND

Signed 6 ($465,000): Mike Baab, C, New England; Rhondy Weston, DE, Tampa Bay; Raymond Clayborn, DB, New England; Ralph Tamm, G, Washington; Larry McGrew, LB, New England; Ken Rose, LB, NY Jets. **Lost 5:** Keith Jones, RB, to Dallas; Ron Middleton, TE, to Washington; Robert Lyons, DB, to Minnesota; Gerald McNeil, WR, to Houston; Hanford Dixon, DB, to San Francisco.

Admitting they might have made a mistake trading Baab, the Browns re-signed him in Plan B. They also grabbed Clayborn from the Patriots. Coach Bud Carson hopes Clayborn has two years left. They spent big bucks on Weston, who played for two teams last season. McGrew could help as a pass-rushing linebacker. **GRADE: B**

MINNESOTA

Signed 10 ($370,000): Doug Marrone, T, New Orleans; Craig Wolfley, T, Pittsburgh; Robert Lyons, DB, Cleveland; Ken Stills, DB, Green Bay; Andy Schillinger, WR, Phoenix; Adam Schreiber, C, NY Jets; Harry Newsome, P, Pittsburgh; Cornell Burbage, WR, Dallas; Ira Hillary, WR, Cincinnati; Shawn Knight, DE, Phoenix. **Lost 3:** Mark Rodenhauser, C, to San Diego; Brad Edwards, DB, to Washington; Travis Curtis, DB, to NY Jets.

Newsome should solve the Vikings' punting problems. Stills could replace Curtis, who started last year as a Plan B signee and left this year via the same door. Wolfley has a chance as a backup guard. **GRADE: B-**

HOUSTON

Signed 8 ($460,000): David Arnold, DB, Pittsburgh; Leander Knight, DB, NY Jets; Gerald McNeil, WR, Cleveland; Carl Harry, WR, Washington; Bernard Ford, WR, Dallas; Ezra Johnson, DE, Indianapolis; Terry Kinard, DB, NY Giants; Tommy Robison, G, Atlanta. **Lost 7:** Bob Mrosko, TE, to NY Giants; Tracey Eaton, DB, to Phoenix; Anthony Spears, DE, to Dallas; Chris Verhulst, TE, to Denver; Jeff Donaldson, DB, to Kansas City; George Yarno, C, to Green Bay; Tracy Johnson, RB, to Atlanta.

After being hit hard by Plan B last year, the Oilers tried to recover. They picked up a potential starting free safety (Kinard) and three speedy wide receiver candidates for Jack Pardee's run-and-shoot (McNeil, Ford and Harry). Johnson might help with the pass rush. Once again, though, they lost young, developing players, including two tight ends (Mrosko and Verhulst) and a defensive lineman (Spears). **GRADE: B-**

MIAMI

Signed 9 ($475,000): Tony Paige, RB, Detroit; Karl Wilson, DE, Phoenix; Cliff Odom, LB, Indianapolis; Stacy Harvey, LB, Kansas City; Donnie Elder, DB, Tampa Bay; Stevon Moore, DB, NY Jets; Mark Higgs, RB, Philadelphia; Kerry Glenn, DB, NY Jets; Mike Reichenbach, LB, Philadelphia. **Lost 11:** Ronnie Lee, T, to Atlanta; Dave Ahrens, LB, to Seattle; Greg Johnson, G, to Dallas; Lorenzo Hampton, RB, to Denver; William Judson, DB, to Detroit; Ernest Gibson, DB, to New England; Tom Brown, RB, to Washington; Jackie Cline, DE, to Atlanta; Louis Cheek, T, to Dallas; Greg Clark, LB, to Green Bay; Tom Toth, G, to San Diego.

The Dolphins came close to gathering the Colts' linebacker corps of the mid-80s. Miami almost signed Johnie Cooks, which would have given them a lineup that included Odom and Barry Krauss. Paige, who got away from the Lions, has a chance of starting at fullback. **GRADE: B-**

DETROIT

Signed 8 ($270,000): Aubrey Matthews, WR, Green Bay; Curtis Wilson, C, New England; Mark Duckens, DE, NY Giants; Eric Wilkerson, RB, Pittsburgh; Sherman Cocroft, DB, Tampa Bay; Herb Welch, DB, Washington; William Judson, DB, Miami; Terry Greer, WR, San Francisco. **Lost 9:** Mike Williams, WR, to Dallas; Joe Milinichik, G, to LA Rams; Tony Paige, RB, to Miami; Trevor Matich, C, to NY Jets; Walter Stanley, WR, to Washington; Jerry Holmes, DB, to Green Bay; James Cribbs, DE, to Green Bay; James Griffin, DB, to Kansas City; Chris Gambol, T, to New England.

The Lions' gains have been offset by their losses. Milinichik was a good offensive lineman who got away. They also lost Matich and Gambol. They did pick up a backup defensive lineman (Duckens) who could help, and Cocroft could start at free safety. At 290 pounds, Wilson is a decent prospect at center. Matthews and Greer fit the run-and-shoot offense, though they don't seem to fit anywhere else in the league. **GRADE: C+**

MORE SMOKE THAN FIRE

ATLANTA

Signed 5 ($215,000): Ronnie Lee, T, Miami; Mike Ruether, C, Denver; Ben Utt, G, Indianapolis; Tracy Johnson, RB, Houston; Jackie Cline, DE, Miami. **Lost 6:** Ron Heller, TE, to Seattle; Evan Cooper, DB, to Tampa Bay; Wayne Radloff, C, to San Francisco; Rick Donnelly, P, to Seattle; Tony Zackery, DB, to New England; Tommy Robison, G, to Houston.

Coach Jerry Glanville pledged to lure some loyal players from the Houston Oilers, but signed only Johnson. The Falcons also gave big contracts and possible starting jobs to Lee (Dolphins) and Utt (Colts). **GRADE: C+**

KANSAS CITY

Signed 12 ($295,000): Peter Shorts, DT, New England; David Ward, LB, New England; Frank Winters, C, NY Giants; James Griffin, DB, Detroit; Rod Jones, TE, Seattle; Mike Morris, C, New England; Bjorn Nittmo, K, NY Giants; Timmie Ware, WR, LA Raiders; Rob Woods, T, Cincinnati; Kevin Harmon, RB, Seattle; Charles Washington, DB, Indianapolis; Jeff Donaldson, DB, Houston. **Lost 4:** Tommie Agee, RB, to Dallas; Clarence Weathers, WR, to Green Bay; Stacy Harvey, LB, to Miami; Mark Adickes, G, to Washington.

The Chiefs' numbers were huge, but their gains were minor. Donaldson is an insurance policy in case free safety Deron Cherry is slow recovering from knee surgery. Nittmo was bought in to spark kicker Nick Lowery after an off season. Coach Marty Schottenheimer added Griffin, Washington and Ware as coverage men for special teams. **GRADE: C**

PHOENIX

Signed 4 ($325,000): Tracey Eaton, DB, Houston; Bill Lewis, C, LA Raiders; Jeff Walker, LB, New Orleans; Lorenzo Lynch, DB, Chicago. **Lost 6:** Jay Novacek, TE, to Dallas; Ron Burton, LB, to LA Raiders; Mike Barber, WR, to Cincinnati; Andy Schillinger, WR, to Minnesota; Scott Dill, T, to Tampa Bay; Karl Wilson, DE, to Miami; Ilia Jarostchuk, LB, to New England; Shawn Knight, DE, to Minnesota.

Losing depth is something the Cardinals couldn't afford. Although they had enough tight ends to cover the loss of Novacek, they will miss Jarostchuk. The only addition with impact potential is Lewis.

TAMPA BAY

Signed 5 ($350,000): Eric Everett, DB, Philadelphia; Evan Cooper, DB, Atlanta; Scott Dill, T, Phoenix; Rodney Rice, DB, New England; Adam Bob, LB, NY Jets. **Lost 8:** Rhondy Weston, DE, to Cleveland; William Harris, TE, to Green Bay; James Wilder, RB, to Washington; Sherman Cocroft, DB, to Detroit; Donnie Elder, DB, to Miami; Don Smith, RB, to Buffalo; Mike Simmonds, G, to San Diego; John Carney, K, to San Diego.

The Bucs draft 'em, teach 'em and let 'em go. That's why losses of second-round draft choices like Smith are so discouraging. Cocroft won the starting free safety job after coming over through Plan B, but he was lost. This franchise needed experienced players but signed cheap, young prospects instead. **GRADE: D+**

ding opened or if it was delayed in hopes of an agreement, we wouldn't get the chance at additional players."

Then one March week during this second year of Plan B auctions, Jones made his move, a player shopping spree that wasn't cheap. The Dallas owner plunked down $1.1 million in signing and reporting bonuses for 16 players. "We looked at it as a second draft," he said, knowing full well that a year earlier, the Packers and Chiefs used the same scheme to climb out of their respective cellars.

Although the Dallas program may not have produced big names, Johnson grabbed what he considered eight new starters, including strong safety Antonio Gibson (New Orleans), free safety James Washington (LA Rams), halfback Keith Jones (Cleveland) and tight end Jay Novacek (Phoenix).

Some of the moves promoted shock and wonder in the NFL ranks. Through Plan B, the Cowboys turned twice unprotected halfback Keith Jones into a financial star. Two years ago, he was the Rams' unknown sixth-round choice making $70,000. This year, the Cowboys gave him an $80,000 signing bonus and a $325,000 salary. Thanks to Plan B stops in Cleveland and Dallas, Jones parlayed his fringe status into a deal paying him more than the Cowboys' 1988 second-round choice, linebacker Ken Norton.

Plan B's second year saw a lot of that, teams paying Macy's prices for pedestrian goods. In Year 1, teams averaged $35,483 in signing bonuses and $13,921 more in roster and reporting bonuses. The average yearly salary was $198,753. Signing bonuses were at fifth-round prices and base salaries at fourth-year levels for middle- to low-round values.

The price doubled in Year 2.

"Players who were getting $35,000 signing bonuses received $65,000 to $80,000 this time," Packers executive vice president of football operations Tom Braatz said. "Players who received $80,000 signing bonuses last year were getting $125,000 to $150,000 this year."

Lost in all of this year's zany bidding was Plan B's impact on front office wheeling and dealing. For instance, player transactions decreased, a reality that spurred Plan B acquisitions this season. Why trade when you have a good chance of purchasing a player via Plan B? Furthermore, with the time it takes to evaluate a college draft and Plan B lists, there's simply less management time to devote to trade talks.

The evidence that Plan B created a semi-embargo on trades is strong. Between 1984 and 1988, NFL teams annually averaged 65 player transactions. But Plan B kept general managers too busy to make pre-draft swaps, with the number dropping to 27 last year — pumped up only because Jones and Johnson made 11 themselves.

Suddenly, the draft, the waiver system and Plan B now are the main player acquisition options. Only 38 players moved through trades in 1989. General managers called around trying to trade disgruntled players, but takers were few. Plan B had changed the game. Said Chicago's Tobin: "One good thing about Plan B is the chance to get rid of the bad apples so you don't have to take them to Platteville (Wisconsin, the Bears' training camp)." Which is precisely how the Bears unloaded linebacker Otis Wilson and cornerback Mike Richardson.

If the NFL and its players ever sign a collective bargaining agreement, Plan B could be relegated to a footnote in league history, right there alongside replacement games and supplemental drafts. In the meantime, Plan B has dispelled at least three league myths:

MYTH #1: Free agency would free players to swarm to warm-weather, big-city sites.

Green Bay (20), Kansas City (17), Washington (15) and Cleveland (14) signed the most players in the first year. If the signing bonuses are big enough, players are willing to buy a warm coat.

MYTH #2: NFL teams would not bid on free agents.

Full-scale auctions were held for defensive linemen, a position cherished by teams, because quality replacements aren't coming through the draft. In 1989, the Redskins and the Seahawks dueled with dollars for Fred Stokes, a Rams defensive end who spent most of his first two years on injured reserve. The Redskins prevailed by giving him a $125,000 signing bonus in a three-year, $855,000 deal. This year, unproven defensive linemen Mark Duckens (Detroit), Rhondy Weston (Cleveland), Lybrant Robinson (Dallas) and Anthony Spears (Dallas) received between $70,000 and $100,000 signing bonuses, all because of heavy bidding.

Fearing the same this year, some teams protected as many as seven defensive linemen. Only 46 were available, compared to 84 linebackers, 83 offensive linemen, 82 defensive backs, 59 wide receivers, 56 running backs, 35 tight ends, 20 quarterbacks, 15 punters and 10 kickers.

MYTH #3: Backups on good teams would flee at the first opportunity.

The world champion San Francisco 49ers make life so good for their backups that only two left in 1989 and one this year. A partial explanation is that the 49ers wrote a few quiet, behind-the-scenes deals. For example, tight end Brent Jones watched his salary balloon from $70,000 into the $300,000 level, even though he was left unprotected twice. He refused to sign with another team.

Such deals are considered unfair within labor war. But remember the 1987 replacement games, when some franchises refused to offer incentives to fill-in players, following the letter of the strike laws? Other teams signed quiet deals with better replacement players and stole an extra win or two. For this reason, the New York Giants lost a chance to return to the Super Bowl. Their poorly conceived strike team went 0-3.

"No one thought for one second Plan B was a perfect system," Donlan said.

For better or worse, perfection was never part of the plan.

The Best of Plan B
1989-90

The following is Pro Preview's Plan B "All-Star" Team, selected from 229 Plan B'ers in 1989 and the 184 signed this year. Included are their statistics from 1989.

OFFENSE

WR—Michael Young, Denver from LA Rams (1989), 22 receptions for 402 yards, 2 touchdowns. **Dennis McKinnon,** Dallas from Chicago (1990), 28 receptions for 418 yards, 3 touchdowns.

T—Ken Dallafior, Detroit from San Diego (1989). **Joel Patten,** San Diego from Indianapolis (1989).

G—Max Montoya, LA Raiders from Cincinnati (1990). **Mike Schad,** Philadelphia from LA Rams (1989).

C—Mike Webster, Kansas City from Pittsburgh (1989).

TE—Eric Sievers, New England from LA Rams (1989), 54 receptions for 615 yards, 0 touchdowns.

QB—Gary Hogeboom, Phoenix from Indianapolis (1989), 204 completions in 306 attempts for 2,591 yards and 14 touchdowns, 19 interceptions, 69.5 rating, rushed for 89 yards and 1 touchdown on 27 carries.

RB—Curt Warner, LA Rams from Seattle (1990), 194 carries for 631 yards, 3.3 average, 3 touchdowns, 23 receptions for 153 yards and 1 touchdown. **Thomas Sanders,** San Diego from Chicago (1990), 41 carries for 127 yards, 3.1 average, 0 touchdowns, 3 receptions for 28 yards and 1 touchdown.

K—Jeff Jaeger, LA Raiders from Cleveland (1989), 34-34 extra points, 23-34 field goal attempts, 103 points.

DEFENSE

DE—Alphonso Carreker, Denver from Green Bay (1989), 5.5 sacks. **Robert Banks,** Cleveland from Houston (1989), 4 sacks, 2 fumbles recovered.

NT—Dan Saleaumua, Kansas City from Detroit (1989), 2 sacks, 1 interception, 5 fumbles recovered.

DT—Bob Golic, LA Raiders from Cleveland (1989), 3.5 sacks.

OLB—Victor Jones, Detroit from Tampa Bay (1989), 2 fumbles recovered. **E.J. Junior,** Miami from Phoenix (1989), 1 sack.

ILB—Barry Krauss, Cleveland from Indianapolis (1989) and claimed by Miami on waivers, 1 sack. **Thomas Benson,** LA Raiders from New England (1989), 2 sacks, 2 interceptions, 2 fumbles recovered.

CB—Ray Clayborn, Cleveland from New England (1990), 1 interception. **Wymon Henderson,** Denver from Minnesota (1989), 3 interceptions.

SS—Antonio Gibson, Dallas from New Orleans (1990), 2 fumbles recovered.

FS—Dave Waymer, San Francisco from New Orleans (1990), 6 interceptions, 1 fumble recovered.

P—John Kidd, San Diego from Buffalo (1990), 65 punts for 39.4 gross average, 32.2 net average.

MVP—Dan Saleaumua, Kansas City

NEW ENGLAND

Signed 11 ($845,000): George Adams, RB, NY Giants; Zeke Mowatt, TE, NY Giants; Richard Harvey, LB, Buffalo; Ilia Jarostchuk, LB, Phoenix; Damian Johnson, G, NY Giants; Bob White, C, Dallas; Ernest Gibson, DB, Miami; Chris Gambol, T, Detroit; Jamie Morris, RB, Washington; Chris Gannon, DE, San Diego; Tony Zackery, DB, Atlanta. **Lost 17:** Emanuel McNeil, DT, to NY Jets; Tom Rehder, T, to NY Jets; Glenn Antrum, WR, to NY Jets; Peter Shorts, DT, to Kansas City; David Ward, LB, to Kansas City; Curtis Wilson, C, to Detroit; Mike Baab, C, to Cleveland; Terrence Cooks, LB, to Dallas; Howard Feggins, DB, to NY Giants; Rodney Rice, DB, to Tampa Bay; Raymond Clayborn, DB, to Cleveland; Aaron Chubb, LB, to Green Bay; Larry McGrew, LB, to Cleveland; Darryl Holmes, DB, to Pittsburgh; Mike Morris, C, to Kansas City; Milford Hodge, DE, to Washington; Patrick Egu, RB, to NY Jets.

Owner Victor Kiam had to sell a lot of razors for this group. All are questions. Three potential starters from the Giants have histories of injuries — Adams (hip), Johnson (knee) and Mowatt (knee). But Kiam needed to do something, because fired coach Raymond Berry screwed up the protected list, letting young prospects go to keep ancient quarterback Steve Grogan, defensive end Gary Jeter and Stanley Morgan, a 36-year-old receiver coming off a broken leg. Kiam spent too much, too late. **GRADE: D**

GOING THROUGH THE MOTIONS

CINCINNATI

Signed 2 ($115,000): Paul Palmer, RB, Dallas; Mike Barber, WR, Phoenix. **Lost 3:** Max Montoya, G, to LA Raiders; Ira Hillary, WR, to Minnesota; Rob Woods, T, to Kansas City.

At least the Bengals made an attempt this time around. Barber has some speed as a backup receiver. Palmer could help on kickoff returns. The strategy of offering side deals in order to keep players failed when Montoya handed back his $25,000 advance and signed with the Raiders. **GRADE: C-**

BUFFALO

Signed 2 ($95,000): Rick Tuten, P, Philadelphia; Don Smith, HB, Tampa Bay. **Lost 5:** John Kidd, P, to San Diego; Flip Johnson, WR, to Green Bay; Richard Harvey, LB, to New England; Ronnie Harmon, RB, to San Diego; Fred Smerlas, NT, to San Francisco.

The Bills gambled that teams wouldn't sign Smerlas and Kidd. Whoops. They also lost Harvey, plus two offensive threats in Harmon and Johnson. Virtually ignoring Plan B, the Bills added only a punter (Tuten) and a halfback (Smith). **GRADE: C-**

SEATTLE

Signed 4 ($90,000): Dave Ahrens, LB, Miami; Ron Heller, TE, Atlanta; Rick Donnelly, P, Atlanta; Bobby Joe Edmonds, RB, LA Raiders. **Lost 7:** Donnie Dee, TE, to Green Bay; Harper Le Bel, TE, to Philadelphia; M.L. Johnson, LB, to Green Bay; Rod Jones, TE, to Kansas City; Kevin Harmon, RB, to Kansas City; Curt Warner, RB, to LA Rams; Rod Stephens, LB, to Denver.

Last year the Seahawks exposed themselves with too many inexperienced players at tight end and for the backup offensive line. Now Warner is gone, and the backfield vacancy sign has been posted. Again the Seahawks tried to replace starters in Plan B with rejects or special teams players. The only possible starter is Heller, with Donnelly given a good shot at replacing the erratic Ruben Rodriguez. **GRADE: D**

PITTSBURGH

Signed 2 ($50,000): Billy Griggs, TE, NY Jets; Darryl Holmes, DB, New England. **Lost 7:** Craig Wolfley, T, to Minnesota; Vinson Smith, LB, to Dallas; David Arnold, DB, to Houston; Eric Wilkerson, RB, to Detroit; Harry Newsome, P, to Minnesota; Jason Johnson, WR, to Denver; Tracy Simien, LB, to New Orleans.

The Steelers weakened their special teams with the loss of Newsome and youngsters Arnold and Smith. **GRADE: D**

SHREWD INVESTORS

SAN FRANCISCO

Signed 6 ($475,000): Dave Waymer, DB, New Orleans; Greg Cox, DB, NY Giants; Hanford Dixon, DB, Cleveland; John Shannon, DT, Chicago; Wayne Radloff, C, Atlanta; Fred Smerlas, NT, Buffalo. **Lost 1:** Terry Greer, WR, to Detroit.

The 49ers spent big dollars for insurance policies, primarily of the veteran variety. Smerlas, Dixon, Waymer and Radloff were expensive, but the 49ers don't mind dishing out a few hundred thousand. In two years, the 49ers have lost only two players in Plan B — tight end Ron Heller and Greer. Sound fishy? Surely, owner Eddie Debartolo would not consider violating the NFL's April hands-off agreement by enticing his players with under-the-table incentives. Of course not. **GRADE: B**

LA RAIDERS

Signed 8 ($295,000): George Streeter, DB, Chicago; Max Montoya, G, Cincinnati; Ron Burton, LB, Phoenix; Joe Campbell, LB, San Diego; Ron Brown, WR, LA Rams; Bruce Klosterman, LB, Denver; Elvis Patterson, DB, San Diego; James FitzPatrick, T, San Diego. **Lost 4:** Mark Mraz, DE, to Denver; Bill Lewis, C, to Phoenix; Timmie Ware, WR, to Kansas City; Bobby Joe Edmonds, RB, to Seattle.

The Raiders signed a sure starter in Montoya. Brown, despite costing $2 million over four years, will help on every unit as cornerback, returner and fourth receiver. They might find a linebacker from the threesome of Campbell, Burton and Klosterman. Streeter could develop into a decent strong safety. **GRADE: B+**

LA RAMS

Signed 3 ($125,000): Joe Milinichik, G, Detroit; Hank Ilesic, P, San Diego; Curt Warner, RB, Seattle. **Lost 6:** James Washington, DB, to Dallas; Tony Slaton, G, to Dallas; Dale Hatcher, P, to Green Bay; Kurt Becker, G, to Chicago; Ron Brown, WR, to LA Raiders; Shawn Miller, DE, to Green Bay.

Paying Warner $700,000 — a $400,000 cut from his Seattle salary — was a big gamble, but if his battered legs still have some life he could help them to the Super Bowl. Milinichik is the first move to rebuild the offensive line. Giving up on Miller was a little bit of a surprise, considering the Rams' lack of depth at his position. **GRADE: B-**

NO SHOWS

CHICAGO

Signed 1 ($25,000): Kurt Becker, G, LA Rams. **Lost 7:** George Streeter, DB, to LA Raiders; Dennis McKinnon, WR, to Dallas; Thomas Sanders, RB, to San Diego; Dave Zawatson, T, to NY Jets; Lorenzo Lynch, DB, to Phoenix; John Shannon, DT, to San Francisco; Tony Woods, LB, to New Orleans.

Signing Becker after losing him to Plan B a year ago hardly counts as participating in Plan B. Once again, the Bears lost young depth, letting go defensive backs Lynch and Streeter, not to mention Woods and Zawatson. **GRADE: F**

INDIANAPOLIS

Signed 0. Lost 8: Bruce Plummer, DB, to San Diego; John Brandes, TE, to Washington; Mark Boyer, TE, to NY Jets; Ben Utt, G, to Atlanta; Cliff Odom, LB, to Miami; Ezra Johnson, DE, to Houston; Charles Washington, DB, to Kansas City; Anthony Parker, DB, to NY Jets.

Maybe the Colts fell asleep for two months. They signed no one. Didn't they notice their record was below the 10-victory level? They lost a starting guard (Utt) and several usable role players in Johnson, Odom and Plummer, plus a special teams player (Washington). **GRADE: F**

PHILADELPHIA

Signed 2 ($50,000): Greg Werner, TE, NY Jets; Harper Le Bel, TE, Seattle. **Lost 6:** Eric Everett, DB, to Tampa Bay; Rick Tuten, P, to Buffalo; Ty Allert, LB, to Denver; Mark Higgs, RB, to Miami; David Little, TE, to Denver; Mike Reichenbach, LB, to Miami.

The Eagles lost two of their best special teams players in Allert and Little. Werner, the only significant addition, is at best a backup. **GRADE: F**

NEW ORLEANS

Signed 2 ($105,000): Tracy Simien, LB, Pittsburgh; Tony Woods, DE, Chicago. **Lost 10:** Dave Waymer, DB, to San Francisco; Rod Harris, WR, to Dallas; Walter Johnson, LB, to Dallas; Doug Marrone, T, to Minnesota; Antonio Gibson, DB, to Dallas; Paul Frazier, RB, to Green Bay; Joe Kohlbrand, LB, to NY Jets; Jeff Walker, LB, to Phoenix; James Geathers, DE, to Washington; Pat Swoopes, NT, to Washington.

It's one thing to dislike Plan B; it's another to self-destruct by ignoring it. The Saints have suffered too many losses in two years, leaving themselves with only three defensive linemen and a couple of defensive backs. Woods could be a decent backup. **GRADE: F**

NY GIANTS

Signed 3 ($175,000): Bob Mrosko, TE, Houston; Howard Feggins, DB, New England; Randy Thornton, DB, Denver. **Lost 10:** Mark Duckens, DE, to Detroit; George Adams, RB, to New England; Zeke Mowatt, TE, to New England; Damian Johnson, G, to New England; Frank Winters, C, to Kansas City; Robb White, DE, to Denver; Greg Cox, DB, to San Francisco; Terry Kinard, DB, to Houston; Bjorn Nittmo, K, to Kansas City; Jeff Rutledge, QB, to Washington.

"We were wounded by Plan B," GM George Young said. The Giants said goodbye to two former first-round draft choices (Kinard and Adams), a starting tackle (Johnson) and a quality tight end (Mowatt). Mrosko could fill a void as a backup tight end or developmental tackle. **GRADE: F**

REVIEW

threw for a career-high 401 yards and four TDs as the Redskins demolished the Bears, 38-14.

WEEK 13 — Dec. 3

Jim Everett threw four TD passes, including two in the last four minutes, as the Rams beat the Cowboys, 35-31. Everett completed 27 of 37 for 341 yards.... The Lions' **Richard Johnson** had eight catches for 248 yards, including a 75-yard TD, as Detroit beat New Orleans, 21-14. Johnson's yardage was second in Lions' history only to **Cloyce Box**, who had 302 against the Colts in 1950.... Chiefs PK **Nick Lowery** missed an extra point attempt, snapping a streak of 197 straight, and RB **Christian Okoye** rushed for 148 yards and broke the club rushing record with 1,191 yards as Kansas City defeated Miami, 26-21.... The Bengals notched their first shutout since 1980, beating the Browns, 21-0. It was the first time Cleveland was shut out at home since 1977.... Colts RB **Eric Dickerson** registered his seventh straight 1,000-yard season as Indianapolis lost to New England, 22-16. **Jason Staurovsky** kicked five FGs for the Patriots.... Bears PK **Kevin Butler** set an NFL record with his 24th consecutive FG, breaking the old mark of 23 by **Mark Moseley**, but Chicago lost to Minnesota, 27-16.... The Packers' **Sterling Sharpe** had eight catches for 169 yards, leading Green Bay past Tampa Bay, 17-16. That gave Sharpe 77 receptions for the year, breaking the Packers' single-season record of 74 set by **Don Hutson** in 1942.

WEEK 14 — Dec. 10

Seattle's **Steve Largent** caught the 100th TD of his career in the Seahawks' 24-17 win over the Bengals, breaking **Don Hutson**'s all-time record of 99. Largent, who extended his streak of catching at least one pass in a game to 175, also became the first receiver to surpass 13,000 career yards.... **Joe Montana** threw for 458 yards and a pair of 90-yard TD passes to **John Taylor** in San Francisco's 30-27 win over the Rams. Taylor's TDs of 92 and 95 yards marked the first time in history that a receiver had two 90-yard TD receptions in the same game.... **Barry Sanders** ran for 120 yards and two TDs as the Lions defeated the Bears, 27-17, knocking Chicago out of the playoffs for the first time since 1983.... Two third-quarter sacks by **Chris Doleman** forced a pair of fumbles that were returned for TDs by **Keith Millard** and **Tim Newton** as the Vikings beat the Falcons, 43-17.... **Randall Cunningham** passed for 170 yards and a TD and rushed for 47 yards as the Eagles beat the Cowboys, 20-10. Cunningham had punts of 43 and 53 yards.... Pittsburgh's defense got its first shutout in more than four years, blanking the Jets, 13-0.... QB **John Fourcade** threw for 302 yards and two TDs in the Saints' 22-19 win over the Bills.... **Mark Rypien** threw two TD passes and **Chip Lohmiller** kicked four FGs as the Redskins rallied to beat the Chargers, 26-21, giving **Joe Gibbs** his 100th coaching victory.... **Steve DeBerg** passed for two TDs and **Christian Okoye** had his eighth 100-yard rushing game as Kansas City beat Green Bay, 21-3.

WEEK 15 — Dec. 17

Cincinnati became the third team in the '80s to score 60 points in a game in a 61-7 whipping of the Oilers, who suffered their worst loss in team history. **Boomer Esiason** threw for 326 yards and four TDs, keeping Cincinnati alive for a playoff berth.... Indianapolis QB **Jack Trudeau** threw a career-high four TD passes and **Eric Dickerson** rushed for 107 yards and two TDs in the Colts' 42-13 rout of Miami. Dickerson tied **Jim Brown** for second place on the all-time list with his 58th 100-

(continued on page 128)

1989 FANTASY LEAGUE STATS

Fantasy Football Leagues, a.k.a. Rotisserie Leagues, are found in fertile football grounds throughout the country. Based on "drafting" current players into new teams, participants gain the chance to be "owners." Team competition is based on various point-value formulas, but most such leagues employ four scoring positions (one quarterback, one kicker, two wide receivers, two running backs) and attach points to scored touchdowns and field goals (with respect to distance), as well as extra points and returns. For the purposes of this list, all touchdowns scored (rushing, passing and receiving) are valued at 6 points each, field goals 3 and extra points 1. Space limitations require this list to be cut off at 36 points earned.

			RUSHING			PASSING			RECEIVING			KICKING			KO/PUNT RETURN	TOTAL POINTS
		POS, TEAM	1-9	10-39	40-UP	1-9	10-39	40-UP	1-9	10-39	40-UP	XP	0-39	40-UP		
☐	Majkowski, D.	QB, Green Bay	4	1		11	13	3								192
☐	Everett, J.	QB, LA Rams				12	10	7								174
☐	Montana, J.	QB, San Francisco	3			10	9	7								174
☐	Esiason, B.	QB, Cincinnati				9	14	5								168
☐	Kelly, J.	QB, Buffalo	2			9	10	6								162
☐	Moon, W.	QB, Houston	4			7	13	3								162
☐	Marino, D.	QB, Miami	2			9	9	6								156
☐	Cunningham, R.	QB, Philadelphia	3	1		15	4	2								150
☐	Rypien, M.	QB, Washington	1			8	8	6								138
☐	Cofer, M.	K, San Francisco										49	19	10		136
☐	Lohmiller, C.	K, Washington										41	25	4		128
☐	Elway, J.	QB, Denver	1	2		7	8	3								126
☐	Krieg, D.	QB, Seattle				8	11	2								126
☐	Karlis, R.	K, Minnesota										27	22	9		120
☐	Lansford, M.	K, LA Rams										51	15	8		120
☐	Testaverde, V.	QB, Tampa Bay				10	9	1								120
☐	Treadwell, D.	K, Denver										39	24	3		120
☐	Norwood, S.	K, Buffalo										46	13	10		115
☐	Zendejas, T.	K, Houston										40	18	7		115
☐	Hilliard, D.	RB, New Orleans	11	2			1			4	1					114
☐	Kosar, B.	QB, Cleveland	1			9	3	6								114
☐	Jacke, C.	K, Green Bay										42	14	8		108
☐	Lowery, N.	K, Kansas City										34	17	7		106
☐	Andersen, M.	K, New Orleans										44	17	3		104
☐	Jaeger, J.	K, LA Raiders										34	17	6		103
☐	Rice, J.	WR, San Francisco							7	5	5					102
☐	Tomczak, M.	QB, Chicago		1		5	7	4								102
☐	Trudeau, J.	QB, Indianapolis	2			11	2	2								102
☐	Igwebuike, O.	K, Tampa Bay										33	15	7		99
☐	Miller, C.	QB, Atlanta				3	11	2					1			99
☐	Murray, E.	K, Detroit										36	11	9		96
☐	Stoyanovich, P.	K, Miami										38	14	5		95
☐	Biasucci, D.	K, Indianapolis										31	17	4		94
☐	Davis, G.	K, N. England/Atl.										25	14	9		94
☐	Anderson, G.	K, Pittsburgh										28	12	9		91
☐	Anderson, N.	RB, Chicago	8	1	2				1	2	1					90
☐	Bell, G.	RB, LA Rams	14		1											90
☐	Hebert, B.	QB, New Orleans				5	8	2								90
☐	Hogeboom, G.	QB, Phoenix	1			4	7	3								90
☐	Simms, P.	QB, NY Giants	1			2	8	4								90
☐	Bahr, M.	K, Cleveland										40	11	5		88
☐	Butler, K.	K, Chicago										43	12	3		88
☐	Anderson, O.	RB, NY Giants	12	2												84
☐	Sanders, B.	RB, Detroit	9	5												84
☐	Allegre, R.	K, NY Giants										23	14	6		83
☐	Del Greco, A.	K, Phoenix										28	12	6		82
☐	Bahr, C.	K, San Diego										29	12	5		80
☐	Beuerlein, S.	QB, LA Raiders				3	9	1								78
☐	Sharpe, S.	WR, Green Bay							4	6	2				1	76
☐	Zendejas, L.	K, Phil./Dallas										33	8	6		75
☐	Breech, J.	K, Cincinnati										37	12			73
☐	Ruzek, R.	K, Dall./Philadelphia					1					28	10	3		73
☐	Johnson, N.	K, Seattle										27	10	5		72
☐	Okoye, C.	RB, Kansas City	8	4												72
☐	O'Brien, K.	QB, NY Jets				2	8	2								72
☐	Thomas, T.	RB, Buffalo	5	1					3	2	1					72
☐	Leahy, P.	K, NY Jets										29	10	4		71
☐	Carter, C.	WR, Philadelphia							7	3	1					66
☐	DeBerg, S.	QB, Kansas City				5	5	1								66
☐	Metcalf, E.	RB, Cleveland	4	1	1		1		2	1	1					66
☐	Miller, A.	WR, San Diego							3	5	2				1	66
☐	McFadden, P.	K, Atlanta										18	12	3		63
☐	Gagliano, B.	QB, Detroit	3	1		1	2	3								60
☐	McMahon, J.	QB, San Diego				3	5	2								60
☐	Taylor, J.	WR, San Francisco							2	3	5					60
☐	Walker, H.	RB, Dall./Minnesota	5	2					1	1					1	60
☐	Wilson, W.	QB, Minnesota	1			5	3	1								60
☐	Young, S.	QB, San Francisco	2			3	3	2								60
☐	Staurovsky, J.	K, New England										14	9	5		56
☐	Aikman, T.	QB, Dallas				4	3	2								54
☐	Brister, B.	QB, Pittsburgh				1	5	3								54
☐	Brooks, J.	RB, Cincinnati	3	2	2				1	1						54
☐	Butts, M.	RB, San Diego	6	1	2											54
☐	Byner, E.	RB, Washington	6	1					1	1						54
☐	Carrier, M.	WR, Tampa Bay							3	4	2					54
☐	Clark, G.	WR, Washington							3	4	2					54
☐	Clayton, M.	WR, Miami							1	5	3					54
☐	Fernandez, M.	WR, LA Raiders							2	5	2					54
☐	Grogan, S.	QB, New England				2	4	3								54
☐	Holman, R.	TE, Cincinnati							5	2	2					54
☐	Humphrey, B.	RB, Denver	4	3			1			1						54
☐	Peete, R.	QB, Detroit	3	1		2	3									54
☐	Reed, A.	WR, Buffalo							3	4	2					54
☐	Tate, L.	RB, Tampa Bay	6	2						1						54
☐	Dickerson, E.	RB, Indianapolis	6	1					1							48
☐	Ellard, H.	WR, LA Rams							3	2	3					48
☐	Fourcade, J.	QB, New Orleans	1			1	5	1								48
☐	Harbaugh, J.	QB, Chicago	2	1		2	2	1								48
☐	Hill, D.	WR, Houston							3	4	1					48
☐	Hoge, M.	RB, Pittsburgh	8													48
☐	Johnson, R.	WR, Detroit							3	3	2					48
☐	Martin, E.	WR, New Orleans							2	5	1					48
☐	McGee, T.	WR, Cincinnati								5	3					48
☐	Monk, A.	WR, Washington							3	3	2					48
☐	Muster, B.	RB, Chicago	4	1					2	1						48
☐	Schroeder, J.	QB, LA Raiders				1	4	3								48
☐	Craig, R.	RB, San Francisco	6						1							42
☐	Green, R.	WR, Phoenix							2	2	3					42
☐	Jensen, J.	WR, Miami					1		4	2						42
☐	Johnson, V.	WR, Denver							3	2	2					42
☐	Kramer, T.	QB, Minnesota				5	2									42
☐	Meggett, D.	RB, NY Giants							2	1	3				1	42
☐	Reich, F.	QB, Buffalo				3	3	1								42
☐	Stephens, J.	RB, New England	4	3												42
☐	Vick, R.	RB, NY Jets	2	2	1				1	1						42
☐	Williams, J.L.	RB, Seattle	1						3	2	1					42
☐	Nittmo, B.	K, NY Giants										12	9			39
☐	Brown, E.	WR, Cincinnati							1	5						36
☐	Fenney, R.	RB, Minnesota	4						1	1						36
☐	Ferrell, E.	RB, Phoenix	5		1											36
☐	Highsmith, A.	RB, Houston	3	1					2							36
☐	Jones, C.	WR, New England							2	3	1					36
☐	Jones, K.	RB, Atlanta	5	1												36
☐	Kinnebrew, L.	RB, Buffalo	6													36
☐	Lipps, L.	WR, Pittsburgh			1					2	3					36
☐	Slaughter, W.	WR, Cleveland							1	1	4					36
☐	Smith, S.	RB, Miami	6													36

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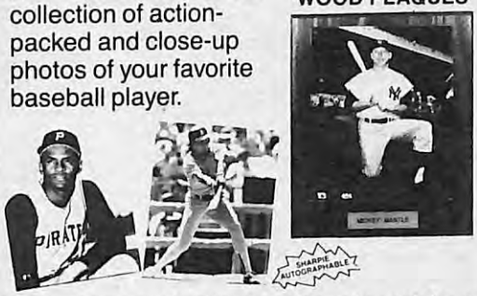

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AGAINST THE ODDS IN THE '80s

NATIONAL FOOTBALL CONFERENCE

ATLANTA FALCONS

Year	Record	Home	Away	Spread	HOME—Fav.	HOME—Under-dog	AWAY—Fav.	AWAY—Under-dog
1989	3-13	3-5	0-8	6-10	1-1	2-4	—	3-5
1988	5-11	2-6	3-5	9-7	2-1	2-3	—	5-3
1987	3-12	2-6	1-6	5-9-1	—	3-5	0-1	2-3-1
1986	7-8-1	2-5-1	5-3	9-7	1-2	3-2	0-1	5-2
1985	4-12	3-5	1-7	6-10	0-1	3-4	—	3-5
1984	4-12	2-6	2-6	4-12	1-5	1-1	0-1	2-5
1983	7-9	4-4	3-5	8-7-1	3-4	1-0	—	4-3-1
1982	5-4	2-3	3-1	5-4	2-3	—	0-1	3-0
1981	7-9	4-4	3-5	6-10	3-4	1-0	2-5	0-1
1980	12-4	6-2	6-2	13-3	3-3	2-0	2-0	6-0
Totals	**57-94-1**	**30-46-1**	**27-48**	**71-79-2**	**16-24**	**18-19**	**4-9**	**33-27-2**

'89 Results: LA Rams (+6½) 21-31, Dallas (-2) 27-21, at Indianapolis (+7) 9-13, at Green Bay (+7) 21-23, at LA Rams (-10) 14-26, New England (-2½) 16-15, at Phoenix (+2) 20-34, at New Orleans (+7½) 13-20, Buffalo (+3½) 30-28, at San Francisco (+10½) 3-45, New Orleans (+7½) 17-26, at NY Jets (+2) 7-27, San Francisco (+9½) 10-23, at Minnesota (+12½) 17-43, Washington (+6½) 30-31, Detroit (+3) 24-31.

CHICAGO BEARS

Year	Record	Home	Away	Spread	HOME—Fav.	HOME—Under-dog	AWAY—Fav.	AWAY—Under-dog
1989	6-10	4-4	2-6	5-11	2-5	1-0	2-3	0-3
1988	12-4	7-1	5-3	11-5	5-3	—	4-1	2-1
1987	11-4	6-2	5-2	8-6-1	4-3	1-0	2-2	1-1-1
1986	14-2	7-1	7-1	6-10	2-6	—	4-4	—
1985	15-1	8-0	7-1	12-3-1	7-1	—	3-2-1	2-0
1984	10-6	6-2	4-4	9-7	4-2	1-1	2-1	2-3
1983	8-8	5-3	3-5	7-7-2	3-4	1-0	1-1	2-2-2
1982	3-6	2-2	1-4	4-5	1-1	1-1	—	2-3
1981	6-10	4-4	2-6	8-8	1-2	3-2	—	4-4
1980	7-9	5-3	2-6	7-9	4-2	0-2	1-1	2-4
Totals	**92-60**	**54-22**	**38-38**	**77-71-4**	**33-29**	**8-6**	**19-15-1**	**17-21-3**

'89 Results: Cincinnati (-3½) 17-14, Minnesota (+1) 38-7, at Detroit (-7) 47-27, Philadelphia (-3½) 27-13, at Tampa Bay (-5) 35-42, Houston (-7) 28-33, at Cleveland (+1) 7-27, LA Rams (-1) 20-10, at Green Bay (-3) 13-14, at Pittsburgh (-3½) 20-0, Tampa Bay (-11) 31-32, at Washington (-1½) 14-38, at Minnesota (+6) 16-27, Detroit (-6½) 17-27, Green Bay (-2) 28-40, at San Francisco (+9) 0-26.

DALLAS COWBOYS

Year	Record	Home	Away	Spread	HOME—Fav.	HOME—Under-dog	AWAY—Fav.	AWAY—Under-dog
1989	1-15	0-8	1-7	6-10	—	2-6	—	4-4
1988	3-13	1-7	2-6	6-9-1	0-2	1-5	—	5-2-1
1987	7-8	3-4	4-4	7-8	0-5	2-0	1-1	4-2
1986	7-9	3-5	4-4	5-10-1	1-4	2-1	2-2	0-3-1
1985	10-6	7-1	3-5	10-6	6-1	1-0	1-4	2-1
1984	9-7	5-3	4-4	7-9	3-4	0-1	2-2	2-2
1983	12-4	6-2	6-2	9-7	4-4	—	5-2	0-1
1982	6-3	3-2	3-1	5-4	2-3	—	3-1	—
1981	12-4	8-0	4-4	9-7	5-3	—	3-4	1-0
1980	12-4	8-0	4-4	*10-6	7-1	—	2-3	1-2
Totals	**79-73**	**44-32**	**35-41**	**74-76-2**	**28-27**	**8-13**	**19-19**	**19-17-2**

'89 Results: at New Orleans (+5) 0-28, at Atlanta (+2) 21-27, Washington (+5) 7-30, NY Giants (+7½) 13-30, at Green Bay (+8) 13-31, San Francisco (+14½) 14-31, at Kansas City (+9) 28-36, Phoenix (+6) 10-19, at Washington (+14) 13-3, at Phoenix (+7) 20-24, Miami (+6½) 14-17, Philadelphia (+6½) 0-27, LA Rams (+9½) 31-35, at Philadelphia (+11½) 10-20, at NY Giants (+11) 0-15, Green Bay (+7) 10-20.

DETROIT LIONS

Year	Record	Home	Away	Spread	HOME—Fav.	HOME—Under-dog	AWAY—Fav.	AWAY—Under-dog
1989	7-9	4-4	3-5	11-5	1-1	3-3	1-0	6-1
1988	4-12	2-6	2-6	8-8	2-1	1-4	—	5-3
1987	4-11	1-6	3-5	5-10	0-2	2-3	0-1	3-4
1986	5-11	1-7	4-4	9-7	1-4	1-2	5-1	2-0
1985	7-9	6-2	1-7	8-8	3-0	3-2	0-2	2-4
1984	4-11-1	2-5-1	2-6	6-10	1-4	1-2	0-1	4-3
1983	9-7	6-2	3-5	8-7-1	3-3	2-0	0-1	3-3-1
1982	4-5	2-3	2-2	5-4	1-2	1-1	1-1	2-0
1981	8-8	7-1	1-7	10-6	4-2	2-0	1-2	3-2
1980	9-7	6-2	3-5	10-5	4-3	1-0	1-1	4-1
Totals	**61-90-1**	**37-38-1**	**24-52**	**80-70-1**	**20-22**	**17-17**	**9-10**	**34-21-1**

'89 Results: Phoenix (+1½) 13-16, at NY Giants (+10½) 14-24, Chicago (+7) 27-47, Pittsburgh (-2½) 3-23, at Minnesota (+12) 17-24, at Tampa Bay (+6½) 17-16, Minnesota (+7½) 7-20, at Green Bay (+6) 20-23, at Houston (+10) 31-35, Green Bay (+1½) 31-22, at Cincinnati (+7½) 7-42, Cleveland (+6½) 13-10, New Orleans (+4) 21-14, at Chicago (+6½) 27-17, Tampa Bay (-2½) 33-7, at Atlanta (-3) 31-24.

GREEN BAY PACKERS

Year	Record	Home	Away	Spread	HOME—Fav.	HOME—Under-dog	AWAY—Fav.	AWAY—Under-dog
1989	10-6	6-2	4-4	9-7	1-4	3-0	1-2	4-1
1988	4-12	2-6	2-6	6-10	0-2	3-3	—	3-5
1987	5-9-1	2-5-1	3-4	8-7	0-3	3-2	1-0	4-2
1986	4-12	1-7	3-5	7-9	1-1	2-4	1-0	3-4
1985	8-8	5-3	3-5	7-8-1	4-2	1-1	0-1-1	2-4
1984	8-8	5-3	3-5	8-7-1	4-2	0-2	2-1	2-2-1
1983	8-8	5-3	3-5	6-9-1	3-3-1	1-0	0-3	2-3
1982	5-3-1	3-1	2-2-1	6-3	2-1	1-0	0-2	3-0
1981	8-8	4-4	4-4	8-8	2-3	1-2	1-0	4-3
1980	5-10-1	4-4	1-6-1	8-8	2-1	2-3	0-1	4-3
Totals	**65-84-3**	**37-38-1**	**28-46-2**	**73-76-3**	**19-22-1**	**17-17**	**6-10-1**	**31-27-1**

'89 Results: Tampa Bay (-3) 21-23, New Orleans (+4½) 35-34, at LA Rams (+9½) 38-41, Atlanta (-7) 23-21, Dallas (-8) 31-13, at Minnesota (+6½) 14-26, at Miami (+3½) 20-23, Detroit (-6) 23-20, Chicago (+3) 14-13, at Detroit (-1½) 22-31, at San Francisco (+10½) 21-17, Minnesota (+3) 20-19, at Tampa Bay (-2½) 17-16, Kansas City (-3) 3-21, at Chicago (+2) 40-28, at Dallas (-7) 20-10.

LOS ANGELES RAMS

Year	Record	Home	Away	Spread	HOME—Fav.	HOME—Under-dog	AWAY—Fav.	AWAY—Under-dog
1989	11-5	6-2	5-3	9-7	5-2	0-1	2-3	2-1
1988	10-6	4-4	6-2	9-7	3-5	—	3-1	3-1
1987	6-9	3-4	3-5	6-9	2-2	1-2	1-2	2-3
1986	10-6	6-2	4-4	9-7	3-3	2-0	2-3	2-1
1985	11-5	6-2	5-3	9-7	5-2	0-1	1-3	3-1
1984	10-6	5-3	5-3	8-8	3-4	0-1	0-1	5-2
1983	9-7	5-3	4-4	8-5-3	3-1-2	0-2	0-1	5-1-1
1982	2-7	1-4	1-3	3-6	1-3	0-1	0-1	2-1
1981	6-10	4-4	2-6	7-9	3-2	1-2	1-2	2-3
1980	11-5	6-2	5-3	10-5-1	3-3-1	1-0	4-2	2-0
Totals	**86-66**	**46-30**	**40-36**	**78-70-4**	**31-27-3**	**5-10**	**14-19**	**28-14-1**

'89 Results: at Atlanta (-6½) 31-21, Indianapolis (-6) 31-17, Green Bay (-9½) 41-38, at San Francisco (+4) 13-12, Atlanta (-10) 26-14, at Buffalo (-4) 20-23, New Orleans (-6½) 21-40, at Chicago (+1) 10-20, at Minnesota (+4½) 21-23, NY Giants (-2½) 31-10, Phoenix (-10½) 37-14, at New Orleans (-1) 20-17, at Dallas (-9½) 35-31, San Francisco (+2½) 27-30, NY Jets (-12½) 38-14, at New England (-7) 24-20.

MINNESOTA VIKINGS

Year	Record	Home	Away	Spread	HOME—Fav.	HOME—Under-dog	AWAY—Fav.	AWAY—Under-dog
1989	10-6	8-0	2-6	8-8	6-2	—	2-5	0-1
1988	11-5	7-1	4-4	9-7	4-4	—	3-3	2-0
1987	8-7	5-3	3-4	4-11	3-4	0-1	0-2	1-4
1986	9-7	5-3	4-4	10-6	4-2	1-1	3-1	2-2
1985	7-9	4-4	3-5	8-8	2-4	1-1	1-1	4-2
1984	3-13	2-6	1-7	5-11	1-1	1-5	—	3-5
1983	8-8	3-5	5-3	8-7-1	1-4-1	1-1	1-1	5-1
1982	5-4	4-1	1-3	5-4	2-1	1-1	—	2-2
1981	7-9	5-3	2-6	8-8	2-3	2-1	0-2	4-2
1980	9-7	5-3	4-4	9-7	3-2	2-1	0-1	4-3
Totals	**77-75**	**48-29**	**29-46**	**74-77-1**	**28-27-1**	**9-12**	**10-16**	**27-22**

'89 Results: Houston (-5) 38-7, at Chicago (-1) 7-38, at Pittsburgh (-8½) 14-27, Tampa Bay (-8) 17-3, Detroit (-12) 24-17, Green Bay (-6½) 26-14, at Detroit (-7½) 20-7, at NY Giants (-2) 14-24, LA Rams (-4½) 23-21, at Tampa Bay (-5½) 24-10, at Philadelphia (-1) 9-10, at Green Bay (-3) 19-20, Chicago (-6) 27-16, Atlanta (-12½) 43-17, at Cleveland (-1½) 17-23, Cincinnati (-4) 29-21.

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

Year	Record	Home	Away	Spread	HOME—Fav.	HOME—Under-dog	AWAY—Fav.	AWAY—Under-dog
1989	9-7	5-3	4-4	8-7-1	3-1	1-2-1	2-3	2-1
1988	10-6	5-3	5-3	7-9	2-6	—	2-1	3-2
1987	12-3	6-1	6-2	10-5	3-3	1-0	4-1	2-1
1986	7-9	4-4	3-5	10-6	2-2	3-1	2-1	3-2
1985	5-11	3-5	2-6	4-12	1-2	1-4	0-1	2-5
1984	7-9	3-5	4-4	7-9	1-4	1-2	1-0	4-3
1983	8-8	5-3	3-5	6-7-3	2-4-1	1-0	0-1-1	3-2-1
1982	4-5	2-3	2-2	4-4	0-1	2-1	—	2-2
1981	4-12	2-6	2-6	6-10	—	3-5	—	3-5
1980	1-15	0-8	1-7	6-9-1	0-2	1-5	—	5-2-1
Totals	**67-85**	**35-41**	**32-44**	**68-78-5**	**14-25-1**	**14-20-1**	**11-8-1**	**29-25-2**

'89 Results: Dallas (-5) 28-0, at Green Bay (-4) 34-35, at Tampa Bay (-2½) 10-20, Washington (+2) 14-16, San Francisco (+3½) 20-24, NY Jets (-7) 29-14, at LA Rams (+6½) 40-21, Atlanta (-7½) 20-13, at San Francisco (+5½) 13-31, at New England (-3) 28-24, at Atlanta (-3) 26-17, LA Rams (+1) 17-20, at Detroit (-4) 14-21, at Buffalo (+6½) 22-19, Philadelphia (+1½) 30-20, Indianapolis (-2½) 41-6.

NEW YORK GIANTS

Year	Record	Home	Away	Spread	HOME—Fav.	HOME—Under-dog	AWAY—Fav.	AWAY—Under-dog
1989	12-4	7-1	5-3	11-4-1	5-2-1	—	3-0	3-2
1988	10-6	5-3	5-3	7-9	5-3	—	0-4	2-2
1987	6-9	5-3	1-6	5-10	4-2	0-2	1-4	0-2
1986	14-2	8-0	6-2	9-5-2	5-1-2	—	1-3	3-1
1985	10-6	6-2	4-4	9-6-1	5-3	—	4-1	0-2-1
1984	9-7	6-2	3-5	7-9	1-4	2-1	1-2	3-2
1983	3-12-1	1-7	2-5-1	5-11	1-4	0-3	—	4-4
1982	4-5	2-3	2-2	3-6	1-4	—	—	2-2
1981	9-7	4-4	5-3	10-6	1-4	2-1	—	7-1
1980	4-12	2-6	2-6	7-9	—	4-4	—	3-5
Totals	**81-70-1**	**46-31**	**35-39-1**	**73-75-4**	**28-27-3**	**8-11**	**10-14**	**27-23-1**

'89 Results: at Washington (+4) 27-24, Detroit (-10½) 24-14, Phoenix (-7½) 35-7, at Dallas (-7½) 30-13, at Philadelphia (+2½) 19-21, Washington (-3) 20-17, at San Diego (-5) 20-13, Minnesota (-2) 24-14, at Phoenix (-3½) 20-13, at LA Rams (+2½) 10-31, Seattle (-10) 15-3, at San Francisco (-5½) 24-34, Philadelphia (-3) 17-24, at Denver (+3) 14-7, Dallas (-11½) 15-0, at LA Raiders (-7) 34-17.

PHILADELPHIA EAGLES

Year	Record	Home	Away	Spread	HOME—Fav.	HOME—Under-dog	AWAY—Fav.	AWAY—Under-dog
1989	11-5	6-2	5-3	8-8	2-5	1-0	2-2	3-1
1988	10-6	5-3	5-3	9-7	3-4	1-0	2-1	3-2
1987	7-8	4-4	3-4	10-5	2-2	2-2	—	6-1
1986	5-10-1	2-5-1	3-5	9-7	1-2	3-2	0-1	5-2
1985	7-9	4-4	3-5	7-9	0-3	2-3	—	5-3
1984	6-9-1	5-3	1-6-1	10-6	1-1	3-3	0-1	6-1
1983	5-11	1-7	4-4	6-10	0-6	1-1	—	5-3
1982	3-6	1-4	2-2	3-6	1-4	—	—	2-2
1981	10-6	6-2	4-4	10-6	6-2	—	3-3	1-1
1980	12-4	7-1	5-3	11-5	5-3	—	5-1	1-1
Totals	**76-74-2**	**41-35-1**	**35-39-1**	**63-69**	**21-32**	**13-11**	**12-9**	**37-17**

'89 Results: Seattle (-5) 31-7, at Washington (+3) 42-37, San Francisco (-1) 28-38, at Chicago (+3½) 13-27, NY Giants (-2½) 21-19, at Phoenix (-4) 17-5, LA Raiders (-6½) 10-7, at Denver (+3) 28-24, at San Diego (-4) 17-20, Washington (-5) 3-10, Minnesota (+1) 10-9, at Dallas (-6½) 27-0, at NY Giants (+3) 24-17, Dallas (-11½) 20-10, at New Orleans (-1½) 20-30, Phoenix (-13) 31-14.

PHOENIX CARDINALS

(St. Louis to 1987)

Year	Record	Home	Away	Spread	HOME—Fav.	HOME—Under-dog	AWAY—Fav.	AWAY—Under-dog
1989	5-11	2-6	3-5	6-10	1-3	0-4	2-0	3-3
1988	7-9	4-4	3-5	7-9	2-3	2-1	1-0	2-5
1987	7-8	4-3	3-5	9-6	3-2	1-1	2-2	3-1
1986	4-11-1	3-5	1-6-1	7-9	0-1	4-3	—	3-5
1985	5-11	4-4	1-7	5-11	3-2	1-2	1-3	0-4
1984	9-7	5-3	4-4	9-7	3-3	1-1	1-3	4-0
1983	8-7-1	4-3-1	4-4	8-8	2-1	2-3	1-0	3-4
1982	5-4	1-3	4-1	5-4	1-0	0-3	2-0	2-1
1981	7-9	5-3	2-6	7-9	2-1	3-2	1-1	1-5
1980	5-11	2-6	3-5	7-9	0-4	2-2	2-0	3-3
Totals	**62-88-2**	**34-40-1**	**28-48-1**	**70-82**	**17-20**	**16-22**	**13-9**	**24-31**

'89 Results: at Detroit (-1½) 16-13, at Seattle (+7) 34-24, at NY Giants (+7½) 7-35, San Diego (-4½) 13-24, at Washington (+10) 28-30, Philadelphia (+4) 5-17, Atlanta (-2) 34-20, at Dallas (-3) 19-10, NY Giants (+3½) 13-20, Dallas (-7) 24-20, at LA Rams (+10½) 14-37, Tampa Bay (-1) 13-14, Washington (+5) 10-29, at LA Raiders (+9) 14-16, Denver (-7) 0-37, at Philadelphia (+13) 14-31.

SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

Year	Record	Home	Away	Spread	HOME—Fav.	HOME—Under-dog	AWAY—Fav.	AWAY—Under-dog
1989	14-2	6-2	8-0	13-3	6-2	—	6-1	1-0
1988	10-6	4-4	6-2	9-7	2-6	—	3-1	4-0
1987	13-2	7-1	6-1	9-6	4-3	—	4-3	1-0
1986	10-5-1	6-2	4-3-1	9-7	5-3	—	3-3	1-1
1985	10-6	5-3	5-3	10-6	5-3	—	4-3	1-0
1984	15-1	7-1	8-0	12-4	4-4	—	8-0	—
1983	10-6	4-4	6-2	9-6-1	3-4-1	—	5-2	1-0
1982	4-5	1-4	3-1	4-5	1-4	—	3-0	0-1
1981	13-3	7-1	6-2	12-4	5-1	2-0	1-1	4-2
1980	6-10	4-4	2-6	8-8	1-3	3-1	—	4-4
Totals	**105-46-1**	**51-26**	**54-20-1**	**95-56-1**	**36-33-1**	**5-1**	**37-14**	**17-8**

'89 Results: at Indianapolis (-3) 30-24, at Tampa Bay (-7½) 20-16, at Philadelphia (+1½) 38-28, LA Rams (-4) 12-13, at New Orleans (-3½) 24-20, at Dallas (+14½) 31-14, New England (-5½) 37-20, at NY Jets (-9) 23-10, New Orleans (-5½) 31-13, Atlanta (-10½) 45-3, Green Bay (-10½) 17-21, NY Giants (-5½) 34-24, at Atlanta (-9½) 23-10, at LA Rams (-2½) 30-27, Buffalo (-6) 21-10, Chicago (-9) 26-0.

TAMPA BAY BUCS

Year	Record	Home	Away	Spread	HOME—Fav.	HOME—Under-dog	AWAY—Fav.	AWAY—Under-dog
1989	5-11	2-6	3-5	9-7	0-1	4-3	—	5-3
1988	5-11	3-5	2-6	10-6	2-0	2-4	—	6-2
1987	4-11	2-5	2-6	7-8	1-2	2-2	1-0	3-4
1986	2-14	1-7	1-7	6-10	1-1	1-5	—	4-4
1985	2-14	2-6	0-8	5-9-2	0-2	3-1-2	—	2-6
1984	6-10	6-2	0-8	10-5-1	3-1-1	3-0	—	4-4
1983	2-14	1-7	1-7	6-9-1	1-4	1-1-1	—	4-4
1982	5-4	4-1	1-3	3-6	0-4	1-0	—	2-2
1981	9-7	6-2	3-5	11-5	5-0	2-1	1-0	3-4
1980	5-10-1	2-5-1	3-5	5-11	1-5	1-1	0-1	3-4
Totals	**45-106-1**	**29-46-1**	**16-60**	**72-76-4**	**14-20-1**	**20-18-3**	**2-1**	**36-37**

'89 Results: at Green Bay (+3) 23-21, San Francisco (+7½) 16-20, New Orleans (+2½) 20-10, at Minnesota (+8) 3-17, Chicago (+5) 42-35, Detroit (-6½) 16-17, at Washington (+7) 28-32, at Cincinnati (+6½) 23-56, Cleveland (+3) 31-42, Minnesota (+5½) 10-24, at Chicago (+11) 32-31, at Phoenix (+1) 14-13, Green Bay (+2½) 16-17, at Houston (+8) 17-20, at Detroit (+2½) 7-33, Pittsburgh (+3) 22-31.

WASHINGTON REDSKINS

Year	Record	Home	Away	Spread	HOME—Fav.	HOME—Under-dog	AWAY—Fav.	AWAY—Under-dog
1989	10-6	4-4	6-2	5-9-2	0-7	1-0	2-2-1	2-0-1
1988	7-9	4-4	3-5	5-11	2-6	—	1-3	2-2
1987	11-4	6-1	5-3	9-6	2-4	1-0	3-2	3-0
1986	12-4	7-1	5-3	9-7	5-3	—	2-3	2-1
1985	10-6	5-3	5-3	8-7-1	2-3-1	1-1	3-1	2-2
1984	11-5	7-1	4-4	10-6	6-2	—	4-3	0-1
1983	14-2	7-1	7-1	11-4-1	4-2-1	1-0	5-2	1-0
1982	8-1	3-1	5-0	6-2	2-1	0-1	2-0	2-0
1981	8-8	5-3	3-5	9-7	3-2	2-1	1-0	3-4
1980	6-10	4-4	2-6	7-9	1-5	1-1	1-1	4-2
Totals	**97-55**	**52-23**	**45-32**	**79-68-4**	**27-35-2**	**7-4**	**24-17-1**	**21-12-1**

'89 Results: NY Giants (-4) 24-27, Philadelphia (-3) 37-42, at Dallas (-5) 30-7, at New Orleans (-2) 16-14, Phoenix (-10) 30-28, at NY Giants (+3) 17-20, Tampa Bay (-7) 32-28, at LA Raiders (-2) 24-37, Dallas (-14) 3-13, at Philadelphia (+5) 10-3, Denver (-2) 10-14, Chicago (+1½) 38-14, at Phoenix (-5) 29-10, San Diego (-9½) 26-21, at Atlanta (-6½) 31-30, at Seattle (+2) 29-0.

AMERICAN FOOTBALL CONFERENCE

BUFFALO BILLS

Year	Record	Home	Away	Spread	HOME—Fav.	HOME—Under-dog	AWAY—Fav.	AWAY—Under-dog
1989	9-7	6-2	3-5	8-8	5-2	1-0	1-4	1-2
1988	12-4	8-0	4-4	9-7	4-3	1-0	2-2	2-2
1987	7-8	4-4	3-4	9-6	1-1	3-3	—	5-2
1986	4-12	3-5	1-7	8-8	3-1	1-3	0-1	4-3
1985	2-14	2-6	0-8	5-10-1	1-0	2-4-1	—	2-6
1984	2-14	2-6	0-8	5-10-1	1-1	2-3-1	—	2-6
1983	8-8	3-5	5-3	7-9	2-3	0-3	1-0	4-3
1982	4-5	4-1	0-4	4-5	2-2	1-0	0-1	1-2
1981	10-6	7-1	3-5	7-9	4-4	—	2-3	1-2
1980	11-5	6-2	5-3	10-6	2-2	4-0	2-3	2-1
Totals	**69-83**	**45-32**	**24-51**	**72-78-2**	**25-19**	**15-16-2**	**8-14**	**24-29**

'89 Results: at Miami (-4) 27-24, Denver (-6½) 14-28, at Houston (+4) 47-41, New England (-7) 31-10, at Indianapolis (P) 14-37, LA Rams (+4) 23-20, NY Jets (-6½) 34-3, Miami (-4½) 31-17, at Atlanta (-3½) 28-30, Indianapolis (-7) 30-7, at New England (-5) 24-33, Cincinnati (-3½) 24-7, at Seattle (-5½) 16-17, New Orleans (-6½) 19-22, at San Francisco (+6) 10-21, at NY Jets (-8) 37-0.

CINCINNATI BENGALS

Year	Record	Home	Away	Spread	HOME—Fav.	HOME—Under-dog	AWAY—Fav.	AWAY—Under-dog
1989	8-8	5-3	3-5	9-7	5-3	—	1-2	3-2
1988	12-4	8-0	4-4	11-5	7-1	—	1-3	3-1
1987	4-11	1-7	3-4	3-12	0-6	0-2	1-1	2-3
1986	10-6	6-2	4-4	7-9	3-4	0-1	0-4	4-0
1985	7-9	5-3	2-6	7-9	2-2	3-1	1-1	1-5
1984	8-8	5-3	3-5	9-6-1	3-2-1	1-1	3-1	2-2
1983	7-9	4-4	3-5	7-9	4-3	0-1	1-2	2-3
1982	7-2	4-0	3-2	5-4	4-0	—	0-3	1-1
1981	12-4	6-2	6-2	11-5	4-2	2-0	2-1	3-2
1980	6-10	3-5	3-5	8-7-1	1-1	3-2-1	0-1	4-3
Totals	**81-71**	**47-29**	**34-42**	**77-73-2**	**33-24-1**	**9-8-1**	**10-19**	**25-22**

'89 Results: at Chicago (+3½) 14-17, Pittsburgh (-10) 41-10, Cleveland (-4) 21-14, at Kansas City (-4½) 21-17, at Pittsburgh (-3½) 26-16, Miami (-7½) 13-20, Indianapolis (-6½) 12-23, Tampa Bay (-6½) 56-23, at LA Raiders (-2) 7-28, at Houston (+5½) 24-26, Detroit (-7½) 42-7, at Buffalo (+3½) 7-24, at Cleveland (+4) 21-0, Seattle (-10) 17-24, Houston (-3½) 61-7, at Minnesota (+4) 21-29.

CLEVELAND BROWNS

Year	Record	Home	Away	Spread	HOME—Fav.	HOME—Under-dog	AWAY—Fav.	AWAY—Under-dog
1989	9-6-1	5-2-1	4-4	8-8	3-4	1-0	3-3	1-1
1988	10-6	6-2	4-4	8-8	5-3	—	1-3	2-2
1987	10-5	5-2	5-3	9-6	4-3	—	4-1	1-2
1986	12-4	6-2	6-2	9-6-1	3-5	—	2-0-1	4-1
1985	8-8	5-3	3-5	9-7	3-2	2-1	1-0	3-4
1984	5-11	2-6	3-5	9-6-1	1-4	2-1	1-0	5-1-1
1983	9-7	6-2	3-5	8-8	4-3	1-0	0-3	3-2
1982	4-5	2-2	2-3	3-6	0-2	1-1	2-0	0-3
1981	5-11	3-5	2-6	6-10	1-4	2-1	—	3-5
1980	11-5	6-2	5-3	9-7	3-3	1-1	0-2	5-1
Totals	**83-68-1**	**46-28-1**	**37-40**	**78-72-2**	**27-33**	**10-5**	**14-12-1**	**27-22-1**

'89 Results: at Pittsburgh (-2) 51-0, NY Jets (-7½) 38-24, at Cincinnati (+4) 14-21, Denver (-4½) 16-13, at Miami (-3½) 10-13, Pittsburgh (-10) 17-17, Chicago (-1) 27-7, Houston (-2) 28-17, at Tampa Bay (-3) 42-31, at Seattle (-2½) 17-7, Kansas City (-7) 10-10, at Detroit (-6½) 10-13, Cincinnati (-4) 0-21, at Indianapolis (-1) 17-23, Minnesota (+1½) 23-17, at Houston (+3½) 24-20.

DENVER BRONCOS

Year	Record	Home	Away	Spread	HOME—Fav.	HOME—Under-dog	AWAY—Fav.	AWAY—Under-dog
1989	11-5	6-2	5-3	6-10	—	2-6	—	4-4
1988	8-8	6-2	2-6	8-8	3-3	2-0	1-2	2-3
1987	10-4-1	7-1	3-3-1	7-7-1	4-2-1	1-0	2-3	0-2
1986	11-5	7-1	4-4	8-7-1	4-4	—	3-2	1-1-1
1985	11-5	6-2	5-3	9-7	3-4	1-0	2-2	3-1
1984	13-3	7-1	6-2	11-5	4-3	1-0	2-1	4-1
1983	9-7	6-2	3-5	9-7	3-2	2-1	1-0	3-4
1982	2-7	1-4	1-3	3-6	1-4	—	—	2-2
1981	10-6	8-0	2-6	6-10	2-4	2-0	1-3	1-3
1980	8-8	4-4	4-4	6-9-1	3-3	0-1-1	0-1	3-4
Totals	**93-58-1**	**58-19**	**35-39-1**	**73-76-3**	**27-29-1**	**11-8-1**	**12-14**	**23-25-1**

'89 Results: Kansas City (-6) 34-20, at Buffalo (+6½) 28-14, LA Raiders (-6½) 31-21, at Cleveland (+4½) 13-16, San Diego (-7½) 16-10, Indianapolis (-3) 14-3, at Seattle (+2) 24-21, Philadelphia (-3) 24-28, Pittsburgh (-7) 34-7, at Kansas City (P) 16-13, at Washington (+2) 14-10, Seattle (-9) 41-14, at LA Raiders (+1½) 13-16, NY Giants (-3) 7-14, at Phoenix (-7) 37-0, at San Diego (-2½) 16-19.

HOUSTON OILERS

Year	Record	Home	Away	Spread	HOME—Fav.	HOME—Under-dog	AWAY—Fav.	AWAY—Under-dog
1989	9-7	6-2	3-5	6-10	3-5	—	2-3	1-2
1988	10-6	7-1	3-5	9-7	5-2	1-0	1-1	2-4
1987	9-6	5-2	4-4	8-6-1	1-2-1	2-1	—	5-3
1986	5-11	4-4	1-7	8-8	3-1	2-2	—	3-5
1985	5-11	4-4	1-7	7-9	1-0	3-4	0-1	3-4
1984	3-13	2-6	1-7	4-11-1	0-2	2-4	—	2-5-1
1983	2-14	2-6	0-8	6-10	—	5-3	—	1-7
1982	1-8	1-4	0-4	2-7	0-1	1-3	—	1-3
1981	7-9	5-3	2-6	7-8-1	4-2-1	1-0	0-1	2-5
1980	11-5	6-2	5-3	7-8-1	3-5	—	4-2-1	0-1
Totals	**62-90**	**42-34**	**20-56**	**64-84-4**	**20-20-2**	**17-17**	**7-8-1**	**20-39-1**

'89 Results: at Minnesota (+5) 7-38, at San Diego (-4) 34-27, Buffalo (-4) 41-47, Miami (-7) 39-7, at New England (-4½) 13-23, at Chicago (+7) 33-28, Pittsburgh (-9) 27-0, at Cleveland (+2) 17-28, Detroit (-10) 35-31, Cincinnati (-5½) 26-24, LA Raiders (-5½) 23-7, at Kansas City (-1½) 0-34, at Pittsburgh (-3) 23-16, Tampa Bay (-8½) 20-17, at Cincinnati (-3½) 7-61, Cleveland (-3½) 20-24.

INDIANAPOLIS COLTS
(Baltimore to 1983)

Year	Record	Home	Away	Spread	HOME—Fav.	HOME—Under-dog	AWAY—Fav.	AWAY—Under-dog
1989	8-8	6-2	2-6	6-10	2-3	2-1	—	2-6
1988	9-7	6-2	3-5	6-10	2-4	1-1	2-1	1-4
1987	9-6	4-4	5-2	9-6	2-3	2-1	1-0	4-2
1986	3-13	1-7	2-6	7-9	—	4-4	—	3-5
1985	5-11	4-4	1-7	8-7-1	2-0	3-3	—	3-4-1
1984	4-12	2-6	2-6	7-9	1-0	2-5	—	4-4
1983	7-9	3-5	4-4	10-6	2-1	2-3	—	6-2
1982	0-8-1	0-3-1	0-5	4-5	—	2-2	—	2-3
1981	2-14	1-7	1-7	3-12-1	0-1	1-5-1	—	2-6
1980	7-9	2-6	5-3	8-8	1-5	2-0	0-2	5-1
Totals	**54-97-1**	**29-46-1**	**25-51**	**68-82-2**	**12-17**	**21-25-1**	**3-3**	**32-37-1**

'89 Results: San Francisco (+3) 24-30, at LA Rams (+6) 17-31, Atlanta (-7) 13-9, at NY Jets (+3) 17-10, Buffalo (P) 37-14, at Denver (+3½) 3-14, at Cincinnati (+6) 23-12, New England (-6) 20-23, at Miami (+3) 13-19, at Buffalo (+7) 7-30, NY Jets (-6) 27-10, San Diego (-5½) 10-6, at New England (+1) 16-22, Cleveland (+1) 23-17, Miami (+1) 42-13, at New Orleans (+2½) 6-41.

KANSAS CITY CHIEFS

Year	Record	Home	Away	Spread	HOME—Fav.	HOME—Under-dog	AWAY—Fav.	AWAY—Under-dog
1989	8-7-1	5-3	3-4-1	8-7-1	2-3-1	2-0	—	4-4
1988	4-11-1	4-4	0-7-1	8-8	1-3	4-0	—	3-5
1987	4-11	3-4	1-7	8-7	1-3	3-0	—	4-4
1986	10-6	6-2	4-4	8-8	2-3	2-1	0-1	4-3
1985	6-10	5-3	1-7	7-9	3-2	2-1	1-1	1-5
1984	8-8	5-3	3-5	8-8	0-4	4-0	0-1	4-3
1983	6-10	5-3	1-7	10-6	4-1	2-1	—	4-4
1982	3-6	2-2	1-4	3-6	0-1	2-1	0-1	1-3
1981	9-7	5-3	4-4	11-5	4-2	1-1	—	6-2
1980	8-8	3-5	5-3	8-8	1-5	1-1	—	6-2
Totals	**66-84-2**	**43-32**	**23-52-2**	**79-72-1**	**18-27-1**	**23-6**	**1-4**	**37-35**

'89 Results: at Denver (+6) 20-34, LA Raiders (-2½) 24-19, at San Diego (+2) 6-21, Cincinnati (+4) 17-21, at Seattle (+7) 20-16, at LA Raiders (+3½) 14-20, Dallas (-9) 36-28, at Pittsburgh (+2½) 17-23, Seattle (-2½) 20-10, Denver (P) 13-16, at Cleveland (+7) 10-10, Houston (+1½) 34-0, Miami (-5) 26-21, at Green Bay (+3) 21-3, San Diego (-8) 13-20, at Miami (+3) 27-24.

LOS ANGELES RAIDERS
(Oakland to 1981)

Year	Record	Home	Away	Spread	HOME—Fav.	HOME—Under-dog	AWAY—Fav.	AWAY—Under-dog
1989	8-8	7-1	1-7	7-9	3-3	2-0	0-1	2-5
1988	7-9	4-4	3-5	6-10	2-5	0-1	3-4	1-0
1987	5-10	3-5	2-5	7-8	3-2	0-3	1-2	3-1
1986	8-8	3-5	5-3	8-8	3-5	—	3-2	2-1
1985	12-4	7-1	5-3	10-6	6-1	0-1	2-3	2-1
1984	11-5	6-2	5-3	8-8	3-5	—	2-3	3-0
1983	12-4	6-2	6-2	10-5-1	4-4	—	4-1	2-0-1
1982	8-1	4-0	4-1	6-3	2-2	—	1-0	3-1
1981	7-9	4-4	3-5	5-11	2-5	1-0	1-5	1-1
1980	11-5	6-2	5-3	9-6-1	3-3	1-1	1-0-1	4-2
Totals	**89-63**	**50-26**	**39-37**	**76-74-2**	**31-35**	**4-6**	**18-21-1**	**23-12-1**

'89 Results: San Diego (-3½) 40-14, at Kansas City (+2½) 19-24, at Denver (+6) 21-31, Seattle (-1½) 20-24, at NY Jets (+3) 14-7, Kansas City (-3½) 20-14, at Philadelphia (+6½) 7-10, Washington (+2) 37-24, Cincinnati (+2) 28-7, at San Diego (-2½) 12-14, at Houston (+5½) 7-23, New England (-6½) 24-21, Denver (-1½) 16-13, Phoenix (-9) 16-14, at Seattle (P) 17-23, at NY Giants (+7) 17-34.

MIAMI DOLPHINS

Year	Record	Home	Away	Spread	HOME—Fav.	HOME—Under-dog	AWAY—Fav.	AWAY—Under-dog
1989	8-8	4-4	4-4	7-8-1	2-4	2-0	1-2	2-2-1
1988	6-10	4-4	2-6	5-11	0-4	2-2	0-1	3-4
1987	8-7	4-3	4-4	7-8	3-4	—	1-3	3-1
1986	8-8	4-4	4-4	7-9	3-3	1-1	1-3	2-2
1985	12-4	8-0	4-4	8-7-1	3-3-1	1-0	3-3	1-1
1984	14-2	7-1	7-1	10-5-1	4-3-1	—	5-2	1-0
1983	12-4	7-1	5-3	10-6	6-2	—	2-3	2-1
1982	7-2	4-0	3-2	6-3	2-1	1-0	1-2	2-0
1981	11-4-1	6-1-1	5-3	11-4-1	4-3	1-0	1-0-1	5-1
1980	8-8	5-3	3-5	7-9	0-5	3-0	0-1	4-3
Totals	**94-57-1**	**53-21-1**	**41-36**	**78-70-4**	**27-32-2**	**11-3**	**15-20-1**	**25-15-1**

'89 Results: Buffalo (+4) 24-27, at New England (+6½) 24-10, NY Jets (-4) 33-40, at Houston (+7) 7-39, Cleveland (+3½) 13-10, at Cincinnati (+7½) 20-13, Green Bay (-3½) 23-20, at Buffalo (+4½) 17-31, Indianapolis (-3) 19-13, at NY Jets (-3) 31-23, at Dallas (-6½) 17-14, Pittsburgh (-7½) 14-34, at Kansas City (+5) 21-26, New England (-5) 31-10, at Indianapolis (-1) 13-42, Kansas City (-3) 24-27.

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

Year	Record	Home	Away	Spread	HOME—Fav.	HOME—Under-dog	AWAY—Fav.	AWAY—Under-dog
1989	5-11	3-5	2-6	8-8	1-3	3-1	—	4-4
1988	9-7	7-1	2-6	10-6	4-2	2-0	0-2	4-2
1987	8-7	5-3	3-4	6-9	3-5	—	0-2	3-2
1986	11-5	4-4	7-1	6-10	2-5	0-1	2-3	2-1
1985	11-5	7-1	4-4	12-4	6-1	1-0	2-1	3-2
1984	9-7	5-3	4-4	6-10	3-3	0-2	3-2	0-3
1983	8-8	5-3	3-5	8-8	2-2	3-1	—	3-5
1982	5-4	3-1	2-3	6-3	1-0	2-1	1-1	2-1
1981	2-14	2-6	0-8	3-13	2-4	0-2	0-3	1-4
1980	10-6	6-2	4-4	10-6	6-2	—	2-3	2-1
Totals	**78-74**	**47-29**	**31-45**	**75-77**	**30-27**	**11-8**	**10-17**	**24-25**

'89 Results: at NY Jets (+2½) 27-24, Miami (-6½) 10-24, Seattle (-3) 3-24, at Buffalo (+7) 10-31, Houston (+4½) 23-13, at Atlanta (+2½) 15-16, at San Francisco (+10½) 20-37, at Indianapolis (+6) 23-20, NY Jets (-7½) 26-27, New Orleans (+3) 24-28, Buffalo (+5) 33-24, at LA Raiders (+6½) 21-24, Indianapolis (-1) 22-16, at Miami (+5) 10-31, at Pittsburgh (+3) 10-28, LA Rams (+7) 20-24.

NEW YORK JETS

Year	Record	Home	Away	Spread	HOME—Fav.	HOME—Under-dog	AWAY—Fav.	AWAY—Under-dog
1989	4-12	1-7	3-5	4-12	1-4	0-3	—	3-5
1988	8-7-1	5-2-1	3-5	8-8	1-4	3-0	1-0	3-4
1987	6-9	4-4	2-5	8-7	1-3	3-1	1-0	3-3
1986	10-6	5-3	5-3	6-10	0-6	2-0	2-2	2-2
1985	11-5	7-1	4-4	8-7-1	3-2-1	1-1	2-2	2-2
1984	7-9	3-5	4-4	6-9-1	1-4	1-2	1-1-1	3-2
1983	7-9	2-6	5-3	5-11	1-7	—	1-3	3-1
1982	6-3	3-1	3-2	5-4	2-2	—	3-2	—
1981	10-5-1	6-2	4-3-1	9-7	2-3	3-0	1-2	3-2
1980	4-12	2-6	2-6	5-11	1-4	1-2	—	3-5
Totals	**73-77-2**	**38-37-1**	**35-40-1**	**64-86-2**	**13-39-1**	**14-9**	**12-12-1**	**25-26**

'89 Results: New England (-2½) 24-27, at Cleveland (+7½) 24-38, at Miami (+4) 40-33, Indianapolis (-3) 10-17, LA Raiders (-3) 7-14, at New Orleans (+7) 14-29, at Buffalo (+6½) 3-34, San Francisco (+9) 10-23, at New England (+7½) 27-26, Miami (+3) 23-31, at Indianapolis (+6) 10-27, Atlanta (-2) 27-7, at San Diego (+4½) 20-17, Pittsburgh (-1) 0-13, at LA Rams (+12½) 14-38, Buffalo (+8) 0-37.

PITTSBURGH STEELERS

Year	Record	Home	Away	Spread	HOME—Fav.	HOME—Under-dog	AWAY—Fav.	AWAY—Under-dog
1989	9-7	4-4	5-3	9-7	3-0	1-4	1-0	4-3
1988	5-11	4-4	1-7	7-8-1	2-3-1	2-0	—	3-5
1987	8-7	4-3	4-4	8-7	2-1	2-2	1-1	3-3
1986	6-10	4-4	2-6	9-6-1	3-1	1-2-1	—	5-3
1985	8-8	5-3	3-5	6-10	3-5	—	1-2	2-3
1984	9-7	6-2	3-5	8-8	5-2	0-1	1-5	2-0
1983	10-6	4-4	6-2	8-8	2-6	—	3-1	3-1
1982	6-3	4-0	2-3	6-3	4-0	—	1-3	1-0
1981	8-8	5-3	3-5	8-7-1	5-3	—	1-3	2-1-1
1980	9-7	6-2	3-5	3-13	3-5	—	0-6	0-2
Totals	**78-74**	**46-29**	**32-45**	**72-77-3**	**32-26-1**	**6-9-1**	**9-21**	**25-21-1**

'89 Results: Cleveland (+2) 0-51, at Cincinnati (+10) 10-41, Minnesota (+8½) 27-14, at Detroit (+2½) 23-3, Cincinnati (+3½) 16-26, at Cleveland (+10) 17-7, at Houston (+9½) 0-27, Kansas City (-2½) 23-17, at Denver (+7) 7-34, Chicago (+3½) 0-20, San Diego (-2½) 20-17, at Miami (+7½) 34-14, Houston (+3) 16-23, at NY Jets (+1) 13-0, New England (-3) 28-10, at Tampa Bay (-3) 31-22.

SAN DIEGO CHARGERS

Year	Record	Home	Away	Spread	HOME—Fav.	HOME—Under-dog	AWAY—Fav.	AWAY—Under-dog
1989	6-10	4-4	2-6	10-6	1-2	3-2	—	6-2
1988	6-10	3-5	3-5	8-7	2-0	1-4	—	5-3
1987	8-7	4-3	4-4	6-9	2-4	0-1	0-1	4-3
1986	4-12	2-6	2-6	7-9	1-3	3-1	1-0	2-5
1985	8-8	6-2	2-6	7-8-1	2-2	3-1	0-1-1	2-4
1984	7-9	4-4	3-5	8-8	1-4	2-1	3-2	2-1
1983	6-10	4-4	2-6	5-11	2-3	2-1	0-5	1-2
1982	6-3	3-1	3-2	6-3	3-1	—	1-1	2-1
1981	10-6	5-3	5-3	7-9	3-5	—	2-4	2-0
1980	11-5	6-2	5-3	7-9	3-5	—	3-3	1-1
Totals	**72-80**	**41-34**	**31-46**	**71-79-1**	**20-29**	**14-11**	**10-17-1**	**27-22**

'89 Results: at LA Raiders (+3½) 14-40, Houston (+4) 27-34, Kansas City (-2) 21-6, at Phoenix (+4½) 24-13, at Denver (+7½) 10-16, Seattle (-1) 16-17, NY Giants (+5) 13-20, at Seattle (+6½) 7-10, Philadelphia (+4) 20-17, LA Raiders (+2½) 14-12, at Pittsburgh (+2½) 17-20, at Indianapolis (+5½) 6-10, NY Jets (-4½) 17-20, at Washington (+9½) 21-26, at Kansas City (+8) 20-13, Denver (+2½) 19-16.

SEATTLE SEAHAWKS

Year	Record	Home	Away	Spread	HOME—Fav.	HOME—Under-dog	AWAY—Fav.	AWAY—Under-dog
1989	7-9	3-5	4-4	6-10	1-5	1-1	—	4-4
1988	9-7	5-3	4-4	8-8	4-2	0-2	1-2	3-2
1987	9-6	6-2	3-4	8-7	4-3	1-0	1-3	2-1
1986	10-6	7-1	3-5	9-7	5-2	1-0	—	3-5
1985	9-7	6-2	3-5	7-8-1	3-5	—	3-1	1-2-1
1984	12-4	7-1	5-3	10-6	4-3	1-0	3-1	2-2
1983	9-7	5-3	4-4	8-8	2-2	2-2	1-1	3-3
1982	4-5	2-3	2-2	4-5	1-2	1-1	—	2-2
1981	6-10	5-3	1-7	6-10	2-3	3-0	—	1-7
1980	4-12	0-8	4-4	6-10	0-5	1-2	—	5-3
Totals	**79-73**	**46-31**	**33-42**	**72-79-1**	**26-32**	**11-8**	**9-8**	**26-31-1**

'89 Results: at Philadelphia (-5) 7-31, Phoenix (-7) 24-34, at New England (+3) 24-3, at LA Raiders (+1½) 24-20, Kansas City (-7) 16-20, at San Diego (+1) 17-16, Denver (-2) 21-24, San Diego (-6½) 10-7, at Kansas City (+2½) 10-20, Cleveland (+2½) 7-17, at NY Giants (+10) 3-15, at Denver (+9) 14-41, Buffalo (+5½) 17-16, at Cincinnati (+10) 24-17, LA Raiders (P) 23-17, Washington (-2) 0-29.

REVIEW

yard rushing game.... Green Bay RB **Keith Woodside** ran 68 yards for a TD, sparking the Packers' 40-28 win over the Bears.... San Diego's **Marion Butts** rushed for 176 yards in a 20-13 win over the Chiefs. Chiefs' PK **Nick Lowery** became the 15th player in NFL history to score 1,000 points, increasing his total to 1,004.... Minnesota DT **Keith Millard** had two sacks, giving him 18 for the season and tying **Alan Page**'s 1976 club record. The Vikings still lost to the Browns, 23-17.

WEEK 16 — Dec. 24

Greg Bell rushed for 210 yards — the third 200-yard game of his career — and one TD as the Rams clinched a wild card spot with a 24-20 victory over the Patriots.... Kansas City's **Christian Okoye** rushed for 98 yards in a 27-24 win at Miami to clinch his first NFL rushing title. Okoye finished with 1,480 yards.... **Barry Sanders** of the Lions ran for 158 yards and three TDs in a 31-24 win over the Falcons, ending his first season with 1,470 yards, fourth-best on the all-time list of rookie runners.... The Eagles' **Randall Cunningham** ran for 41 yards in a 31-14 win over Phoenix, giving him 621 for the season. Cunningham became the first QB in the modern era to lead his team in rushing three consecutive years.... The Cowboys' 20-10 loss to Green Bay was their 14th consecutive home defeat, an NFL record.... **Joe Montana** threw a TD pass to **Jerry Rice** in the 49ers' 26-0 win over the Bears and set an NFL record for the highest quarterback rating of all time, 112.4.... The Bills rushed for 233 yards en route to a 37-0 blanking of the Jets that gave them the AFC East title.... **Kevin Mack**'s 4-yard TD run with 38 seconds remaining gave the Browns a 24-20 win over the Oilers and their fourth AFC Central title in five years.... The Redskins spoiled **Steve Largent**'s retirement party, crushing the Seahawks, 29-0. Largent caught two passes for 41 yards, ending his 14-year career with 819 receptions, No. 1 all-time. Seahawk QB **Dave Krieg** fumbled twice to set a single-season record with 18.... **Ottis Anderson** rushed for 74 yards and two TDs, leading the Giants to a 34-17 victory over the Raiders and the NFC East championship.... Minnesota won the NFC Central, beating Cincinnati, 29-21, as **Rich Karlis** kicked five FGs.

NFC Wild Card
Rams 21, Eagles 7
Dec. 31, 1989

Jim Everett threw two early TD passes and **Greg Bell** rushed for 124 yards and a TD as the Rams defeated Philadelphia. It was LA's first victory in 10 playoff games at cold-weather sites. The Rams, who entered the game with a 1-4 record in wild card contests, needed just 7:12 and 12 plays to take a 14-0 lead. On their first possession, Everett threw a 39-yard TD to WR **Henry Ellard**. On their next, Everett threw a 4-yard TD to TE **Damone Johnson**. Bell became only the second runner all season (the other was **Gerald Riggs** in Week Two) to gain more than 100 yards against the Eagles. Everett completed 18 of 33 for 281 yards. Philadelphia's **Randall Cunningham** completed 24 of 40 for 238. The Eagles scored their only TD on a 1-yard run by **Anthony Toney** in the fourth period.

AFC Wild Card
Steelers 26, Oilers 23 (OT)
Dec. 31, 1989

Gary Anderson kicked a 50-yard FG — his fourth of the game — 3:26 into OT after a **Lorenzo White** fumble to give the Steelers the victory. The game was sent into OT when the Steelers' **Merril Hoge**, who finished with 100 rushing yards, scored on a 1-yard run with 46 seconds remaining in regulation. Anderson's kick sent Houston, which had beaten Pittsburgh twice during the regular season, to its third straight defeat, negating a strong comeback performance by Oilers QB **Warren Moon**. With the Steelers leading, 16-9, early in the final quarter, Moon directed two impressive drives, ending in TD passes to WR **Ernest Givins**. Givins had 11 catches, which tied him with several others for third most in a postseason game, for 136 yards. Moon completed 29 of 48 for 315 yards. Pittsburgh's **Bubby Brister** completed 15 of 33 for 177 yards.

NFC Divisional Playoff
49ers 41, Vikings 13
Jan. 6, 1990

Facing the NFL's top-rated defense, San Francisco QB **Joe Montana** completed his first eight passes for 155 yards and two TDs and went on to toss two more TDs in leading the 49ers to a rout of the Vikings. **Roger Craig**, with 125 yards, became the first back to rush for 100 yards against the Vikings all season, and the Niners held the Minnesota defense, which collected 71 during the regular season, sackless. Montana threw TD passes of 72 yards to **Jerry Rice**, 8 yards to **Brent Jones**, 8 yards to **John Taylor** and 13 yards to Rice as the Niners took a 27-3 halftime lead. For the half, Montana was 13 of 16 for 210 yards. He finished 17 of 24 for 241 and no interceptions.

AFC Divisional Playoff
Browns 34, Bills 30
Jan. 6, 1990

Bernie Kosar threw for 251 yards and three TDs and **Clay Matthews** made a key interception of **Jim Kelly** in the final seconds as Cleveland ousted Buffalo. Kosar threw TD passes of 52 and 44 yards to **Webster Slaughter** and 3 yards to **Ron Middleton**, but it was **Eric Metcalf**'s 90-yard TD on a kickoff return in the third quarter that created a 10-point Cleveland lead. Kelly, who threw for 405 yards and four TDs, teamed up with **Thurman Thomas** to bring the Bills back. Using a no-huddle offense, Buffalo pulled within four points at 34-30 when PK **Scott Norwood** missed a PAT following a Thomas TD. Kelly then engineered a final drive, which would have eliminated the Browns if **Ronnie Harmon** hadn't dropped a pass in the end zone. On the next play, Kelly's pass to Thomas at the goal line was intercepted by Matthews.

NFC Divisional Playoff
Rams 19, Giants 13 (OT)
Jan. 7, 1990

Jim Everett threw a 30-yard TD pass to **Flipper Anderson** 1:06 into OT, lifting the Rams to victory. A hotly disputed 27-yard pass interference call on Giants DB **Sheldon White** set up the winning TD pass. On the game-ending play, Anderson got behind Giants cornerback **Mark Collins** and hauled in Everett's pass. The Rams led 7-6 at halftime despite New York's overall dominance. New York had a 6-0 lead until the final seconds of the half, when **Phil Simms**' pass to **Lionel Manuel** was tipped by cornerback **Jerry Gray** and intercepted by safety **Michael Stewart**. His 29-yard return led to a 20-yard TD pass from Everett to Anderson 17 seconds before the half.

AFC Divisional Playoff
Broncos 24, Steelers 23
Jan. 7, 1990

John Elway led a late rally that gave the Broncos a win over the Steelers and a berth in the AFC Championship game opposite the Browns. Elway, who completed 12 of 20 passes for 239 yards, sparked the 71-yard final drive, hitting **Vance Johnson** on a flea-flicker play. **Melvin Bratton** ran 1 yard for the winning TD with 2:27 left. The Steelers got a 120-yard rushing performance from **Merril Hoge** against a Denver defense that had not permitted a 100-yard rusher all season.

NFC Championship
49ers 30, Rams 3
Jan. 14, 1990

The 49ers, with **Joe Montana** completing 26 of 30 for 262 yards and two TDs, routed the Rams to win their second straight conference crown. The 49ers spotted the Rams a 3-0 lead, then stifled the high-powered LA attack. Montana, the top-rated passer in NFL history, completed 18 of 21 first-half passes for 198 yards and two TDs. Montana threw a 20-yard TD pass to **Brent Jones** with 3:33 gone in the second period and later hit **John Taylor** with an 18-yard TD pass. San Francisco's defense intercepted LA's **Jim Everett** three times, holding the Rams to 156 total yards.

AFC Championship
Broncos 37, Browns 21
Jan. 14, 1990

John Elway threw for 385 yards and three TDs as the Broncos won their third AFC title in four years. Elway threw a 70-yard TD pass to **Michael Young** in the second quarter, a 5-yarder to **Orson Mobley** in the third and a 39-yarder to **Sammy Winder** in the fourth. Young caught three passes for 123 yards. Winder, playing for the injured **Bobby Humphrey**, also scored on a 7-yard run. Cleveland's **Bernie Kosar**, limited to just 210 passing yards, tossed touchdowns of 27 and 10 yards to **Brian Brennan**.

Super Bowl XXIV
49ers 55, Broncos 10
Jan. 28, 1990

Led by MVP **Joe Montana**'s record five TD passes, the 49ers blasted the Broncos and matched the 4-0 Super Bowl mark of the Pittsburgh Steelers. It was the largest margin of victory and the second-largest spread, 12 points, in Super Bowl history. The Broncos fell to 0-4 in Super Bowls, matching the Minnesota Vikings in infamy. Montana completed 22 of 29 passes for 297 yards and didn't throw an interception. At one point, he completed 13 straight, a Super Bowl record. Montana, who quarterbacked all of San Francisco's Super Bowl wins, won the MVP for a record third time. In four Super Bowls, Montana completed 83 of 122 passes for 1,142 yards, 11 TDs and no interceptions. Montana threw three TD passes (20, 38 and 28 yards) to **Jerry Rice**, a 7-yard TD to TE **Brent Jones** and a 35-yard TD to **John Taylor**. Denver's **John Elway** completed just 10 of 26 passes after opening 1 for 9, for only 108 yards. He threw two interceptions and fumbled once. Montana set the following career records in Super Bowl XXIV: Most passes attempted — 122 (old mark: 98, **Roger Staubach**, Dallas); Most passes completed — 83 (old mark: 61, Staubach); Highest completion percentage — 68.0 (old mark: Montana's previous record of 65.6); Most yards passing — 1,142 (old mark: 932, **Terry Bradshaw**); Most TD passes — 11 (old mark: 9, Bradshaw); Most attempts without an interception — 122 (old mark: Montana's previous mark of 93). Montana set the following game records: Most TD passes — 5 (old mark: 4, Bradshaw and **Doug Williams**); Most consecutive pass completions — 13 (old mark: 11, **Phil Simms**).

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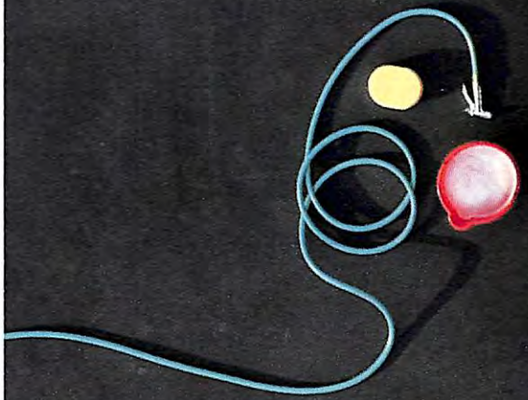

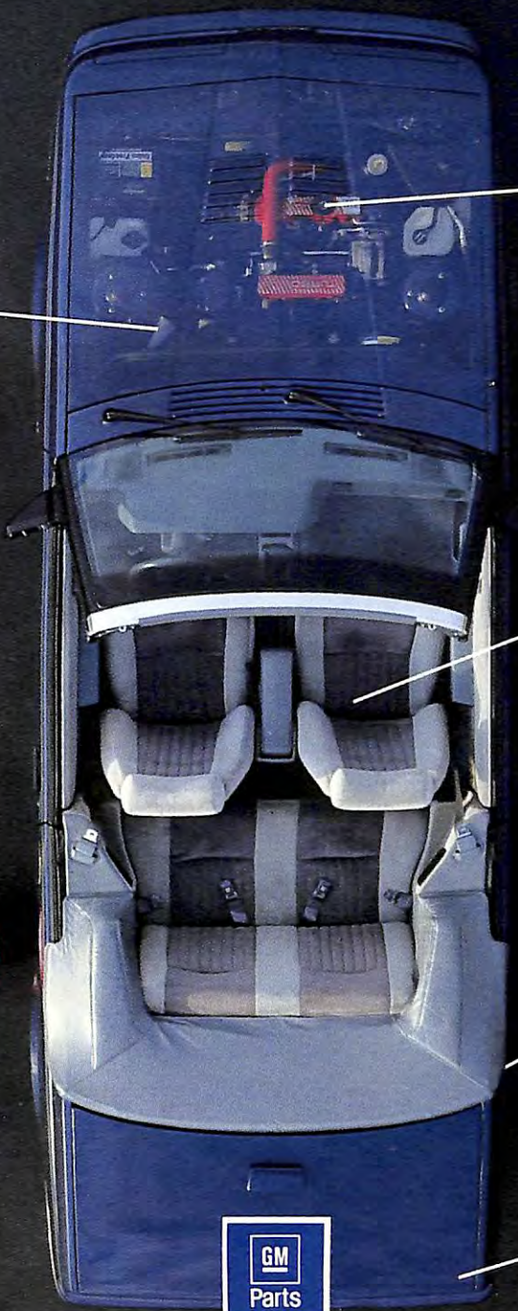

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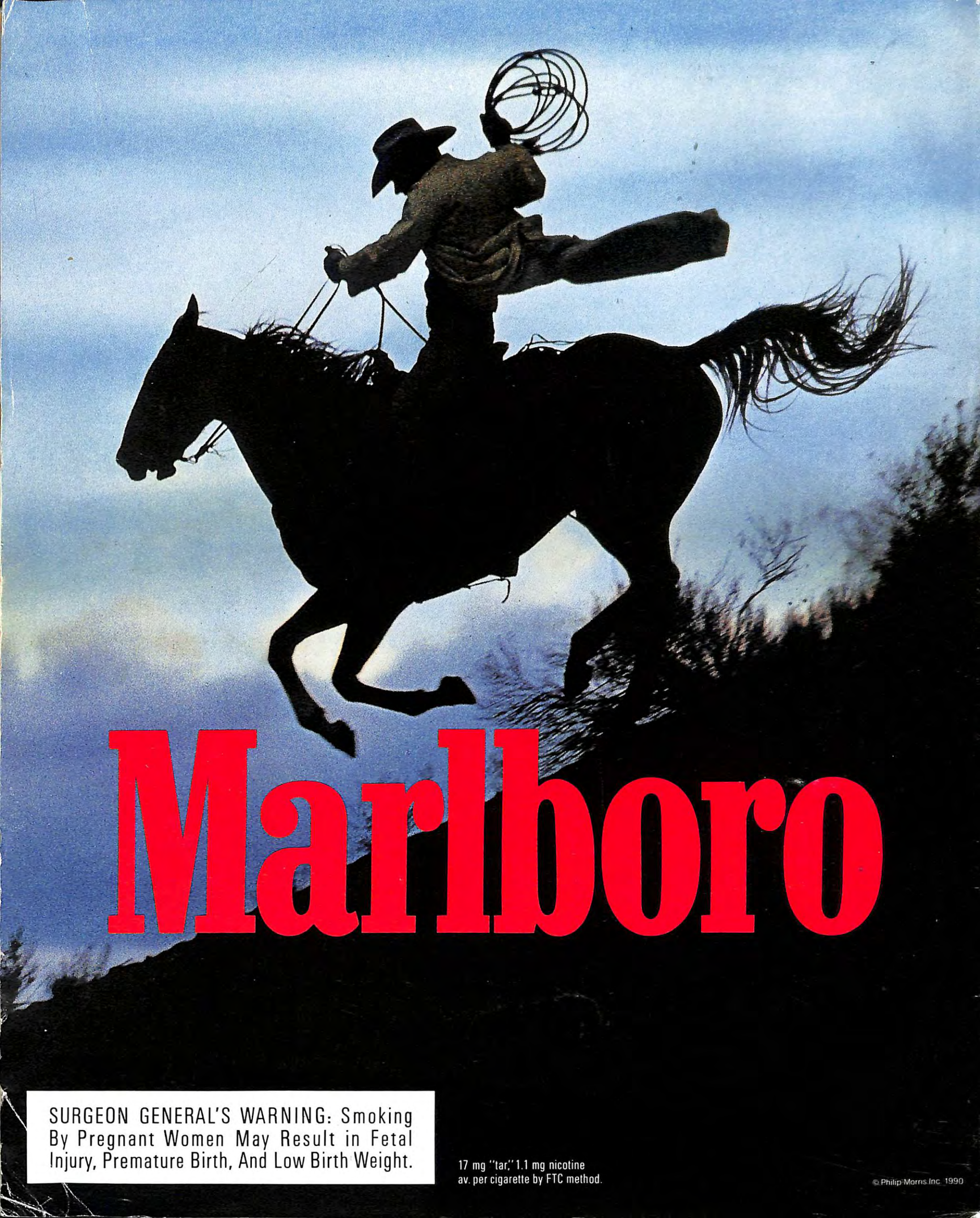

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